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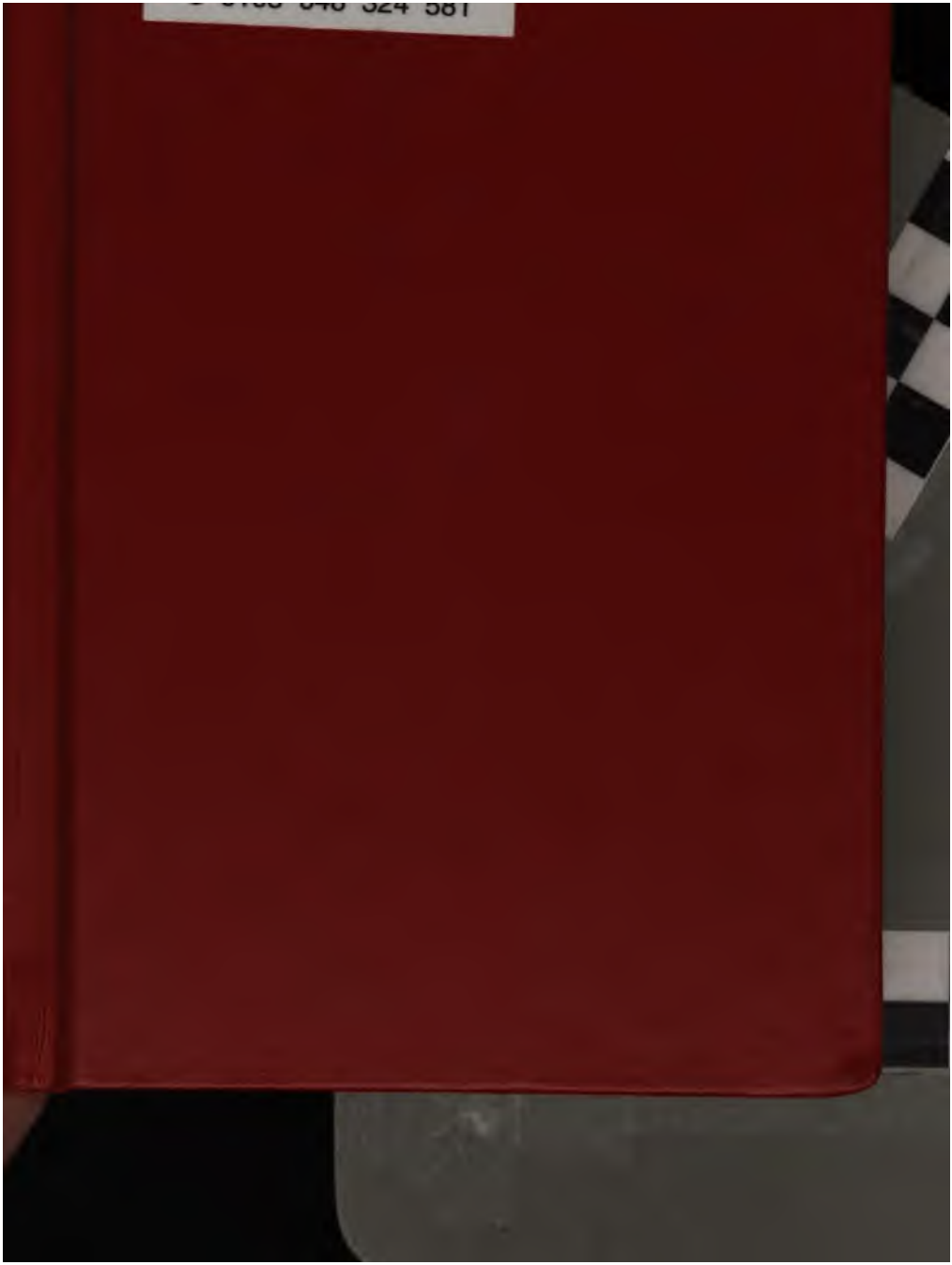

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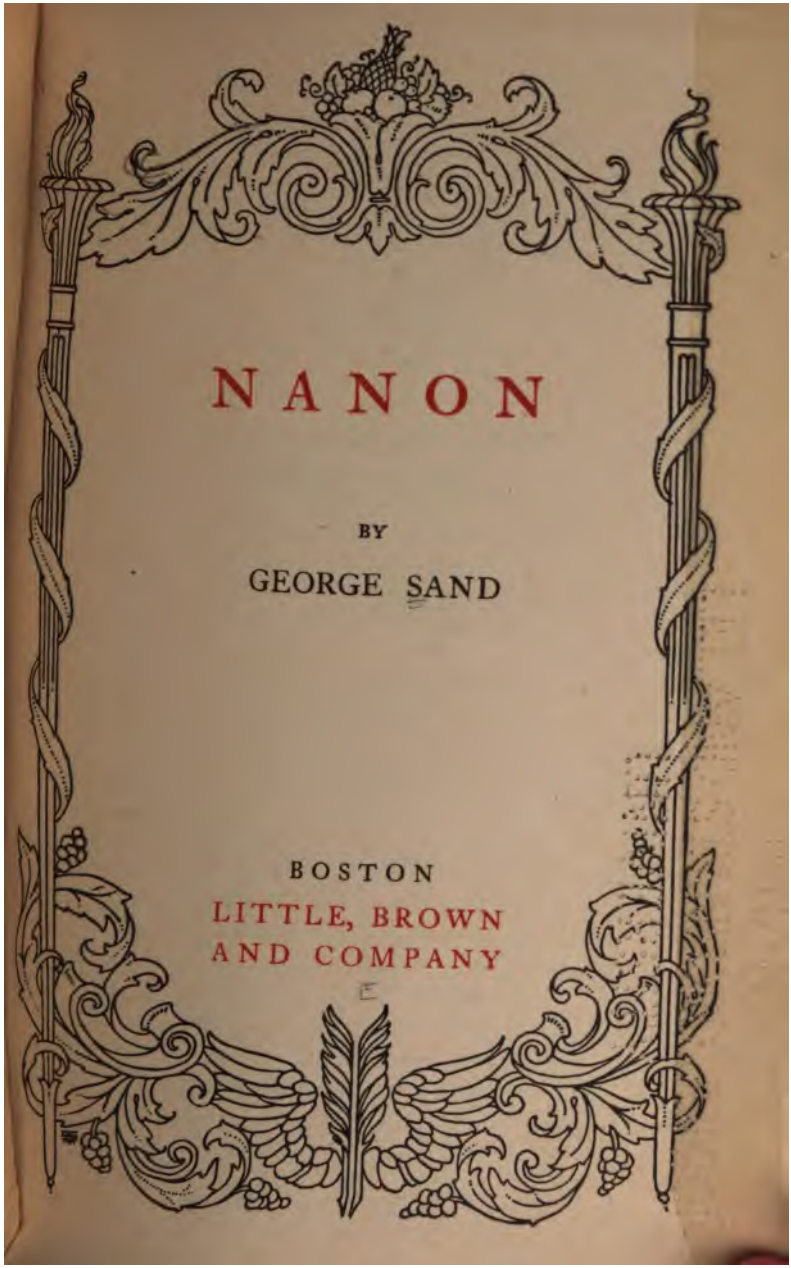

NANON

BY

GEORGE SAND

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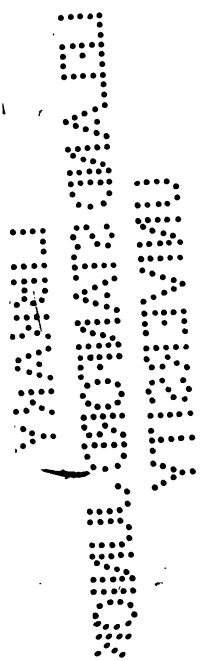

UNIVERSITY PRESS:
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NANON.

I.

In my old age — that is, in 1850 — I undertake to write the story of my girlhood.

My object is not to interest my readers in myself; it is to preserve for my children and my grandchildren the dear and sacred memory of him who was my husband.

I hardly know if I am capable of authorship, — I who knew not even how to read till I was more than twelve; but I will do my best.

I shall begin at the beginning, and endeavor to trace back my own life to the earliest recollections of my infancy. Those recollections are all confused, as indeed is always the case with the recollections of children whose intelligence has not been drawn out by education in their early days. I know that I was born in 1775; and that by the time I was five I had neither father nor mother, nor have I any recollection of ever having seen them. Both died of the small-pox, and I came very near dying at the same time. Innoculation was not then known among the peasantry of France. I was brought up by my great-uncle, — a widower, who had already taken charge of two orphan grandsons a little older than myself.

We were some of the poorest peasants in the parish; but we never asked assistance. My great-uncle was a

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day-laborer, and his two grandsons were beginning to earn their bread; but we did not own one shovelful of earth, and we had hard work to pay the rent of a wretched little thatched cottage and a tiny garden, where scarcely anything would grow because of the over-hanging boughs of our neighbor's chestnut-tree. Happily many of the chestnuts when they were ripe fell over on our side of the enclosure, and sometimes we even helped them a very little; this could hardly be thought blameworthy, because the principal branches spread over our land, and hindered the growth of our vegetables.

Notwithstanding his poverty, my great-uncle, whose name was Jean le Pic, was an honest, upright man, and when his grandsons marauded upon the lands of other people he scolded and punished them. He liked me best, he said, because I was no picker and stealer. He taught me to be true and just in all my dealings, and to say my prayers. He was very strict, yet very kind, and sometimes fondled me when he stayed at home on Sundays.

This is about all I recollect up to the moment when my childish intelligence suddenly opened of itself, thanks to a circumstance which I fear seems very puerile, but which to me became a great event, and the starting point of my real history.

One day Père Jean took me between his knees, gave me a smart slap on my cheek, and said, —

"Little Nannette, listen to me, and pay great attention to what I am going to say to you. Don't cry! I slapped you, not because I was angry with you, but solely for your own good, my child."

I wiped my eyes, I checked my sobs, and paid attention.

"You see," said my uncle, "you are eleven now, and up to this time you have never been called upon to work for anybody. It was not your own fault. We have not owned anything that you could take care of, and you are not strong enough to be hired out by the day. Other children have had beasts to watch and tend, and to lead out on the commons; we have never been able to buy any to start upon, but at last I have been able to lay something by, and to-day I am going to the fair to buy a sheep. Now, you must promise me solemnly, in the sight of God, to take good care of it. If you feed it well, if you do not lose it, if you look well after its little fold, it will grow finely, and with the money it brings next year I will buy you two, and the year after, four; and then won't you be proud when you go about as well off as other little girls who can be trusted, and are worth something to their families? Do you hear what I am telling you; and will you do as I have said?"

I was so overcome that I could hardly speak; but my great-uncle perceived that I meant to do my best, and he set out for the fair, telling me that he would be back about sundown.

That day was the very first that had ever seemed to me long, the first when I had taken any interest in my occupations. I began to fancy that I was good for something, since I could sweep the house, make it tidy, and pick up chestnuts. But I did these things by instinct, or by habit; I did not know how I had learned them. That morning I was glad to see Mariotte, a neighbor better off than ourselves, who probably had brought me up, and whom I had seen coming every day to my uncle's house, without ever speculating in my own mind as to why she took care of me and of our cottage. Now I questioned her, after re-

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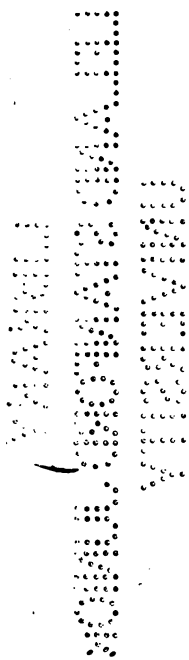

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peating to her all that Père Jean had said to me, and then I found out that she looked after our house in exchange for work done for her by my great-uncle, who cultivated her garden and mowed her field. She was a kind-hearted, good woman, who no doubt had often before given me good advice and teaching; but though I had always obeyed her, her words now made an impression upon me for the first time.

"So your great-uncle," she said, "has made up his mind at last to have a flock! I have been at him about it this long time. When you have sheep you will have wool; I'll teach you how to get the grease out of the fleece, how to card it, and to dye it blue or black; and then when you go to the fields, like other little girls with their sheep, you will learn to knit; and I bet you will be proud when you 've made a pair of stockings for poor Père Jean, who sometimes has to go round with his legs half bare — poor, dear, good man! — up to the middle of the winter, for his leggings often want mending. But I can't see to everything. If you could get a goat you might have milk. You have seen me making cheese, and so could you. *Allons!* you must keep on, and take courage. You are a clean little girl, with plenty of good sense, and very careful of the poor old clothes you wear. You 'll help Père Jean, some of these days, out of his troubles; and so you ought, for poor as he is, when your father and mother died he took you, and has taken care of you."

I was much impressed both by the compliments and the encouragements of Mariotte. I began to feel a certain consciousness of my own worth, and I felt as if I had grown a head taller since the night before.

It was Saturday. On Saturdays at supper, and at breakfast the next morning, we ate bread. The rest of the

week, like all the other poor inhabitants of La Marche, we lived on chestnuts and buckwheat porridge. I am talking of a long time ago, — it was about 1787. In those days many families lived no better than we did; now all are somewhat better fed. There are roads now, so that people can interchange their produce, and our chestnuts can be bartered for a little grain. On Saturday nights my uncle used to bring home from market a rye loaf and a little bit of butter. This night I resolved to make his soup myself, and I got Mariotte to show me how to do so. I went into the garden and pulled up a few vegetables, and I peeled them carefully with my own dull little knife. Mariotte seeing I was so handy, lent me hers for the first time. Before that she never would let me touch it, for fear I should spoil something. My big cousin Jacques got home from market that night before my uncle. He brought the loaf and the butter and the salt. Mariotte went home, and I set to work. Jacques laughed at my ambitious notion of making soup by myself, and declared it would be horrid. I was put upon my mettle; my soup turned out good, and I got complimented.

"Since you are a woman now," said my great-uncle, as he swallowed my soup, "you deserve the pleasure I am going to give you. Come along and meet your little cousin Pierre, who is bringing home the ewe, and who cannot be far behind me."

So the sheep I so longed for was a ewe, and it probably was as mean a one as ever lived, for she had only cost three francs; but at that time the price seemed to me enormous, and the creature beautiful. Of course I had had plenty of sheep around me all my life, with which I could have compared this one; but I had never taken much interest in other people's flocks, and my sheep

pleased me so much that I fancied it was the most beautiful creature in the whole world. Its face delighted me the moment I set eyes upon it. I fancied that it looked at me with affection; and when it came up to me and ate out of my little hand the leaves and vegetable peelings I had saved for it, I could hardly help screaming for joy.

"Ah, Uncle!" I cried, suddenly struck by a new idea, "you have bought me a most beautiful sheep; but we have not got any sheepcote to put it in!"

"We'll make it one to-morrow," he replied. "To-night it may sleep in one corner of the cottage. It is not very hungry to-night; it has been travelling, and it is tired now. Early in the morning you can take it out upon the road yonder, where there is grass by the wayside, and it can eat its fill."

To wait till next morning before giving Rosette anything to eat! The fast seemed to me too long. Already, you see, I had found a name for my prize. I got leave to go, before it was too dark, along the hedge-rows, and to pick leaves for her. I stripped some branches of dwarf elms and of wild nut-trees, and I filled my apron with green leaves. It grew dark, and my hands were torn and bleeding; but I felt no pain, I felt no fear, though never before had I been out alone so late after sundown.

When I got back, all our household was asleep in spite of the bleatings of Rosette, who probably did not like being alone, and was bemoaning her former companions. She was *strançe*, as they say in our part of the country; that is, she was out of her own surroundings. She would neither eat nor drink. I was very uneasy and very unhappy; but next day she seemed very glad to get out of doors and to eat grass. I wanted my great-uncle to make haste and make her a nice place where she could sleep

upon good litter, and as soon as Mass was over I ran and cut heather for that purpose, on the commons. As everybody else was doing the same thing for their sheep, there was no great quantity to be had by any one; but one solitary sheep did not need a great deal.

My great-uncle, who was no longer very active, had hardly begun his building when I got home, so I set to work to help him, and to smooth the ground for him. At last, about night-fall, Jacques having brought in some big flat stones, some branches, some rolls of turf, and a whole lot of broom, the sheepcote was nearly ready. The entrance was so narrow and so low, that I was the only one of us who could get into it.

"Now, you see," said Père Jean, "the creature is all yours, for you are the only person who can get into its fold. If you forget to make its bed, and to give it grass by day and water at night, it will grow sick, and dwindle away, and then you will be sorry."

"There is no danger of that!" I replied proudly, and from that moment I felt that I was somebody. I distinguished my own personality from that of others. I had an occupation, a duty, a responsibility, a possession of my own. I had an object in life,— dare I say a sort of motherhood, when I am speaking of a sheep?

Anyhow, it was certain I was born to take care of something, to serve and to protect something or some one, were it only a poor dumb creature; and I was beginning life when I had something to care for besides myself. At first I was very happy in seeing Rosette so nicely housed; but before long, having heard that the wolves, with which our woods were filled, prowled almost up to the houses in our village, I could not sleep at night for fancying I heard them scratching and gnawing at the

frail shelter of Rosette. My great-uncle laughed at me, saying that they would not dare to come so near us. I however held to my point, until he strengthened the little structure with more big stones, and covered the roof with larger branches, laid quite close together.

My sheep occupied me all the autumn. We had to bring it into the house during the bitter freezing winter nights. Père Jean loved cleanliness; and instead of being like most peasants of that period who had no dislike to lodging with their sheep, or even with their swine, he objected to their smell, and indeed would not put up with it. But I kept Rosette so clean and her litter so fresh, that he let me do as I liked about her. I may add that as I grew day by day more attached to Rosette, I interested myself more in my other duties. I wanted to please my uncle and my cousin so much that they would never refuse me anything that I wanted for my sheep. I fixed up the house, and prepared all their meals for them. Mariotte only helped me when the work was heavy. I soon learned to wash and to mend. I carried my sewing into the fields, and I learned to do two things at a time, for all the while I plied my needle I had an eye upon Rosette. I was a good shepherdess in every sense of the word. I never let her graze long in the same place, so as to keep up her appetite. I never let her exhaust all the herbage on one spot; I led her about gently, and selected little bits of pasture along the roads for her; for sheep, I must own, have little judgment, — they nibble where they happen to find themselves, and do not go away till there is nothing but the bare ground to bite upon. To them the saying could very well be applied: "They can see no farther than their noses, because they are too lazy to try." I was also careful not to hurry along the road, made dusty

by the feet of many sheep, when at night-fall I led her home to her stable. I had noticed that she coughed when the dust got into her throat, and I knew that sheep have delicate lungs. I was careful too to pick out from her litter all hurtful plants, the seeds of some of which when ripe get into the eyes or nose of sheep and make sores or inflammations. For that reason I washed her face every day, and so learned to wash my own, and to keep myself clean, — a thing I had never been taught, but which I began to imagine must be as necessary for human creatures as for animals. As I became active, and found myself of more importance, I began to be afraid of being ill; but, though thin and delicate to look at, I grew strong and almost insensible to fatigue.

I have not done talking about my sheep. It was destined that Rosette should shape my life. But in order to understand fully what I have to relate, I must tell you about our parish and its inhabitants.

We were only about two hundred souls, — that is, about fifty households, — scattered along a narrow line half a league in length, for we lived among the hills in a narrow gorge. This gorge grew wider in its middle and formed a little valley, which contained the Monastery of Valcreux and its dependencies. This Monastery was large and well built, and was surrounded by high walls, with low doors under deep arches, defended by towers. The chapel was ancient, small but lofty, and very richly ornamented in its interior. It opened on the great courtyard, along the sides and other end of which were built the refectory, the chapel house, and cells for twelve brethren, besides stables, cowsheds, barns, and tool-houses; for the monks owned nearly the whole parish, and their lands were cultivated and their harvest reaped by forced labor, — called

corvées. In consideration of which they let cottages at very low rents to their laborers. All the houses in the gorge belonged to them.

Notwithstanding their possession of this wealth, the monks of Valcreux were considerably straitened. It is curious, but true, that people who have no family ties seldom make the most of their possessions. I have seen old bachelors lay up dollar after dollar, stinting themselves in every way, and then die without leaving a will behind them, as if they had had no real consideration either for themselves or others. I have seen others willing to submit to extortion that they might be left in peace (out of mere indolence, not for the sake of doing good with their money). But of all those whom I have seen, these men, the "last of the Monks," most forcibly impressed me. I assure you they had not the smallest notion of good management. They were debarred from love of family, yet they cared not for the future prosperity of their community. They did not value the soil for its powers of production, neither did they give it the care that should have been given it. They lived from hand to mouth like travellers, cultivating some fields too long, neglecting others, exhausting the land where it was convenient, and letting fertile places run to waste for want of cultivation. There were several big ponds belonging to the monks that they might have drained and cultivated; but then they would have had to buy fish for their fast-days, and they found it easier to catch it in their own ponds. They were very lazy, and cut their firewood just around the convent, letting their other timber deteriorate for want of being trimmed. They were constantly pilfered by the peasants from the village; while they would have done real service to the poor around them by teaching them

honesty and breaking up that laziness which leads to robbery. They however were too indolent and too timid. When they were wronged, they said nothing.

It must be owned that those were times in which the best monks might have found it hard to make themselves respected. Our people had no cause of quarrel with these men, who for the most part were neither kind nor unkind, and would have done good probably readily enough, had they known how. Forbearing as they were, our people complained of them and wished to get rid of them. They no longer respected them, — nay, they even seemed beginning to despise them. The peasant is ever ready to set little store by those who cannot manage their own affairs. I know what peasants think, for I was born a peasant. They care first of all for the soil that feeds them. The little morsel of land that a French peasant owns is to him like a bit of his own soul; while it is not his he covets it; and whether it be his or not, he respects it, for it is *land,* — land on which he sees (nay, he can even touch) gifts straight from the hand of God. In my young days the peasant cared little for hard money; he did not know what use to put it to. To roll up wealth, to toil and make a competence, was all very well for the *bourgeois.* We, with whom everything in those days was exchanged, — labor on the one part, and payment in kind upon the other, — did not respect specie much, even in our dreams. We saw so little coin, we handled it so seldom, that we cared but little for it; our hopes were all to own a field, a wood, a garden of our own, and we used to say that —

"A bit of land of right ought to belong to every man who labors and brings children into the world."

A habit of devotion still retained its power over the peasantry, but it no longer restrained the *bourgeois;* and

as for the nobles, it had long been to them a thing for jest and mockery. The convents got no longer gifts, legacies, or offerings, and noble families now rarely sent their younger children to the cloister; therefore there was no fresh money in the coffers of the monks, and the value of their property was running down. When a man took orders (to be a monk was no longer the fashion), it was pleasanter to be an *abbé* and to be supported by the State.

So the Monastery of Valcreux had only six monks when it should have had a dozen; and when after a while the community was dissolved, three only were left of them.

To return, — I will not say *à mes moutons*, for there being only one of them I cannot use the plural number, — but to my dear Rosette. Summer had come, and grass was now so scarce, even alongside the ditches, that I did not know how to invent ways of feeding her. I was obliged to go high up the mountain, and I was afraid of wolves. I was miserable; no rain came, and Rosette grew very thin. Père Jean seeing how troubled I was did not in any way blame me, but he was vexed at having put his money, his three francs, into a purchase which cost so much trouble, and seemed likely to return so little profit.

One day, as I was passing alongside a meadow which belonged to the Monastery, and which stayed green and grassy because of the stream that crossed it, Rosette stopped at the entrance and began to bleat so piteously that I went half out of my mind with grief and pity. The gate was not closed, but only pushed up to the gate-post, and even then they did not join; for Rosette managed to get her head through, and then her body, until at last she was entirely inside.

I was confounded at first at seeing Rosette in a spot to which I dared not follow her, for I knew that I should be wrong. I was a reasonable being; I knew she had no right to be where she was, — poor, innocent, dumb creature! I began to feel my conscience trouble me, and to remember how proud I had been of never having pilfered anything from anybody,— for which I had been always praised by my uncle, and had earned the respect of my cousins, all the more because they were not so particular as I was. So I asked myself whether it were not my duty to make my knowledge of what was right supply Rosette's want of knowledge. I called to her: she would not hear me; she was eating so eagerly; she seemed so pleased.

I called her again after a minute, — a good long minute, I must own, — when suddenly I saw in the enclosure the kindly face of a young novice who was looking at me, and laughing.

II.

I WAS dreadfully ashamed. Of course the lad was making fun of me; and I suppose I had a good deal of self-respect, for his ridicule went to my heart, and I could not restrain my tears.

At this the young monk looked surprised, and said in tones as gentle as his face, —

"What are you crying for, little girl? What is the matter?"

"Because — because," I sobbed, "my ewe has got into your field."

"Well, and what then? — you have not lost her. She likes the grass right well. Don't you see how greedily she is eating it?"

"She likes it, I know; but — but I am vexed because she is trespassing."

"What do you mean by *trespassing?*"

"Why! eating what belongs to other people."

"Other people? You don't know what you are talking about, *ma petite.* The property of the monks belongs to everybody."

"What! are there no more monks? I did not know."

"Have they taught you no religion?"

"Oh! yes. I can say my prayers."

"Well! every morning then you ask God to give you your daily bread, and the Church which is rich ought to give bread to all who ask it in the name of the Lord.

The Church would be good for nothing if she did not dispense charity."

I opened my eyes, and comprehended nothing; for though the monks of Valcreux were by no means hard or cruel, they kept a sharp eye on thieves, and the Père Fructueux, who was the steward of the establishment, made a great fuss, and threatened all kinds of dreadful punishments when the boys of the neighborhood did anything wrong. He would run after them with a switch, — not very far, for he was too fat for running, but he scared them all the same, and he was considered very terrible, though he would not have hurt a cat.

I asked the boy if he thought the Père Fructueux would let my sheep eat his grass.

"I don't know," he replied. "But I do know that the grass is not his."

"Whose is it, then?"

"It is God's. He makes it grow to feed the sheep. Don't you believe me?"

"*Dame!* I don't know. But what you say would suit me well! If my poor little Rosette could only eat all she wants to on your lands during the drought, I promise you it should not make me idle! As soon as there is any new grass on the hillsides, I will drive her up there. Indeed, I am telling you the truth."

"Well! leave her where she is, and come back and get her this evening."

"This evening? No — no indeed! If the monks saw her they would take her home and put her in the pound, and my great-uncle would be obliged to go and ask her back again, and have them scold him. And he would scold me too, and tell me I was as bad as the rest, and then I should be sorry."

"I see you have been well brought up, my little girl. Where does your great-uncle live?"

"Up yonder, in that smallest house, half way up the ravine. Do you see it? — the one next the three great chestnut-trees."

"All right, I will bring back your sheep when it has done eating."

"But suppose the monks should scold you?"

"They won't scold me. I shall remind them of their duty."

"Are you one of their masters?"

"I? — oh, no. I am only a pupil. I have been sent here to be educated, and to be fitted to be a monk when I come of age."

"When will you be of age?"

"In a few years. I am nearly sixteen."

"Then you are what they call a novice?"

"Not yet. I have only been here two days."

"Then that is why I have not seen you. Where do you come from?"

"Not from this neighborhood: did you ever hear of the family and the Château of Franqueville?"

"*Ma foi*, no. I don't know any place but Valcreux. Are your parents very poor that they have sent you so far from home?"

"My parents are very rich. But there are three of us children, and as they do not want to divide their fortune, they are keeping it all for the eldest son. My sister and I are only to have one-third divided between us, that we may both be able to go into a convent."

"How old is your sister?"

"Eleven. And you?"

"I am not quite thirteen."

"Then you are big of your age; my sister is a head shorter."

"Of course you love your little sister?"

"I have never loved any one else."

"Ah, bah! — But your father and mother?"

"I hardly know them."

"And your brother?"

"I know him still less."

"How can that be?"

"Our parents had us brought up in the country, — my sister and me, — and they did not often come to see us. They lived with their eldest son in Paris. But you never can have heard of Paris, since you do not even know about Franqueville."

"Paris, — is that where the king lives?"

"Precisely."

"Do your parents live with the king?"

"Yes, they have places in his household."

"Are they the king's servants?"

"They hold office in his household. But you cannot understand all that, and it cannot interest you. Tell me about your sheep. Does it mind you when you speak to it?"

"Not very well; not when it is as hungry as it is to-day."

"Then when I have to bring it back, — won't it come to me?"

"Probably not. I had rather wait, since you will let it stay a little while in your pasture."

"Mine? I have nothing of my own, *ma petite*, I never shall have anything. I have been brought up to understand that nothing will ever belong to me; and you who have a sheep are richer than I."

"Are you sorry to have nothing?"

"Not a bit. I am glad that I need not trouble myself about perishable things."

"*Perishable?* Ah, yes, — true. My sheep may perish."

"And while it lives it is a great trouble to you."

"Of course. But I love it, and I never grudge the trouble. Don't you love anything?"

"I love everything."

"Except sheep?"

"I neither love them nor hate them."

"But they are very gentle creatures. Do you love dogs?"

"I used to have one that I loved. But they would not let me bring him with me."

"Surely, you feel sorry to be sent here like a naughty boy among strangers?"

He looked at me with surprise, as if this were a new idea to him, and then he answered, —

"I ought not to torment myself about such things. I have been always told not to entangle myself, not to become fond of anything; to learn to care for nothing. 'That is your duty,' they have always said to me, 'and you will only find happiness if you do your duty.'"

"How odd! My great-uncle says just the same thing to me. But then he says it is my duty to be always busy, to be kind to everything at home, and to be active about all kinds of work. Most likely that is how they talk to poor people's children, while they tell rich ones differently."

"No — but they say such things to children bred to enter convents. Now I must go back to vespers; get your sheep when you want it, and if you like to bring it back to-morrow —"

"Oh, I never should dare to do that," cried I.

"You *may* bring it back. I will speak to the Père Fructueux."

"Will he do as you ask him?"

"He is very kind. He will not refuse me."

Then the lad left me, and I saw him passing through the gardens of the Monastery, called home by the sound of the chapel bell. I let Rosette graze a little longer; then I called her away and took her home. From that day forward I can perfectly recollect all that has happened to me. At first I did not dwell on my conversation with the young monk. I was full of the delightful hope that he would get me permission occasionally to pasture Rosette on the monks' land. I should have been satisfied with very little. I had a natural leaning toward moderation, my uncle having always set me an example of sobriety and politeness.

At home I was not fond of telling a long story. My cousins were apt to tease me, and that did not encourage me; but with this permit of pasturage in my head, I told the whole family at supper all that I have here told you, and I did it so distinctly as to attract the attention of my great-uncle.

"Ah, *oui-dà!*" he exclaimed, "so the little gentleman that they brought Monday night to the convent, and whom nobody had seen there before, is little Franqueville. He is the younger son of a great house, — that's the way they call it. You know Franqueville very well, my lads? A splendid mansion — ha?"

"I passed that way once," said my cousin Pierre. "It is ever so far off, around by St. Léonard in the Limousin."

"Bah! it is thirty-six miles, or so," said Jacques, laughing. "You don't call *that* far! I went there once, — that time that the Father Superior of Valcreux gave me a letter to carry, and lent me the big jackass of the Monastery,

to save time. That letter must have been something of importance, for generally he does not like to lend that ass to any one."

"You ignorant rascal!" cried my great-uncle, "what you call a great jackass is a mule."

"No matter, grandfather! I saw the castle kitchen, and I spoke to the gentleman in charge, M. Prémel. I saw the young gentleman himself too, and now I understand the letter. It was intended to smooth the way for his getting into the Monastery."

"The way had been smoothed ever since he was born," replied Père Jean. "They were only waiting till he should be old enough. And I myself — *moi qui vous parle* — I had my late sister (the mother of this little girl) dairy-woman in that castle. So I know all about the family. They are people who have land worth about two hundred thousand good crowns, and their land lies well together. Their property is not neglected and pillaged like that of our Monastery. Their man of business — their agent as they call him — is a very smart man, and very hard to deal with. But that 's the kind of man who ought to manage a great estate."

Here Pierre remarked that it seemed no good to be so rich when they had to put away two children out of three. He, in the light of such new notions as had made their way into our cottages, blamed the ideas some noblemen still held on the subject of their younger sons.

My uncle was a peasant of the old school. He stood up for the law of primogeniture, and said that without it all the great estates would soon be ruined.

Before long they got to disputing. Pierre, who had a quick temper, raised his voice at his grandfather, and ended by telling him, —

"'T is lucky we poor folks have nothing to be divided, for here's my elder brother whom I love right well, and whom I should soon hate if I knew he was to have everything that now belongs to us, and that I could never have my share."

"You don't know what you are talking about," answered my great-uncle. "Your ideas are only fit for poor folks. Noblemen think very differently. Their first object is to keep up the family greatness, and the younger sons are proud to sacrifice themselves to keep rank and wealth in the family."

I asked the meaning of *sacrificing themselves.*

"You are too little to understand," replied Père Jean, and he went off to bed muttering his prayers.

As I kept on saying the word "sacrifice" over to myself, Pierre, who liked to display his knowledge, said, —

"I know what grandfather meant. In spite of all he says in favor of the monks, and in spite of their being rich and enjoying the pleasure of being lazy, everybody knows that they are very miserable."

"Why should they be miserable?"

"Because they are despised," broke in Jacques, shrugging his shoulders.

And he went off to bed in his turn.

I lingered a little, after having washed up the supper-things, very quietly, so as not to wake Père Jean, who was snoring soundly; and while Pierre covered up the fire with ashes (its light was all we had after dark), I crept near to my cousin and continued our whispered conversation. I was anxious to know why the monks should be despised and unhappy.

"Well, you see," said my cousin, "monks are men who have no wives, nor have they any children. They

hardly know themselves if they have a father or a mother, or brothers or sisters. As soon as they are in the trap, their families forget them and desert them. They lose even their own names; it is just like falling from the moon. They grow fat and ugly — and dirty too, in their serge gowns, though they *might* keep themselves tidy. Then, too, they get tired of muttering prayers all day long. It is all right and proper to pray to God, but it is my notion that He does not expect prayers all the time, and that the monks must bore him with their church bells and their Latin. Besides, monks are of no use. It would be a great deal better to send them all home again, and to give their lands to those who would know how to cultivate them."

This was not the first time I had heard the same ideas, but they seemed hateful to me. I had learned to respect property. It seemed to me impossible to make any such changes, and useless to desire them.

"You are talking nonsense, Pierre," I replied; "we cannot help it if the rich are rich. But what do you think of that young novice they have got, who promised to get me leave to let Rosette graze in the monks' meadow? Do you think they will pay any attention to him?"

"They won't heed him in the least," said Pierre. "He 's like a young colt, not yet broken to the plough. The old ones, who know their business, will take away your sheep if they catch it in their pasture, and the novice will get punished for disobedience."

"Oh, then I won't go back there. I would n't get him punished for the world! He is so honest and so kind."

"You might go during morning service. Père Fructueux is always in church at that hour."

"No, no!" I cried. "I don't intend to teach myself to steal."

I went to sleep full of anxiety. I was not thinking of Rosette so much as of that poor young lad — so kind — who was destined to be miserable, despised, and *sacrificed*, as my great-uncle had told me.

During the night there came a storm, with lightning enough to set the heavens in a blaze, and growls of thunder fit to set your hair on end, — at least, so my great-uncle told us in the morning, for he was the only one in our household who heard the noise. Young people can sleep soundly, even under a roof that lets in rain. But when I opened the shutter that closed the opening that let light into my chamber (we knew nothing of window-glass), I saw the ground all wet, and the water trickling round the rocks in little furrows that it had broken through the sand. I ran to see if the wind had carried off my sheepcote. It was all right, and I was happy, for rain would bring us grass in a day or two.

About noon the sun came out, and I set out with Rosette for a little spot sheltered among some high rocks, where I generally found a little pasture, and where the other children did not go, the path down to it being bad and somewhat dangerous. I found myself alone there, and I sat down beside the rushing, foaming water of the torrent. I had been there some time when I heard some one calling me by name, and soon I saw the young monk coming down the ravine, and directing his steps toward me. He was very clean in his new gown; he looked happy; he jumped boldly from stone to stone. He seemed to me the handsomest fellow in the world. And yet he was never really handsome, my poor dear Franqueville; but he looked so friendly, his eyes were so bright and his

expression so kindly that his face could never have been thought ugly by any one.

I was greatly astonished.

"Why, I exclaimed," "how did you manage to find me? Who told you my name?"

"I 'll tell you by and by," he said. "But first let us eat some breakfast. I am very hungry."

With that, he pulled out from under his frock a little basket in which were a pasty and a bottle, each containing things that I had never before tasted; namely, meat and wine. I had to be much pressed before I would taste the latter, — partly because I was prudent, partly because I was shy. I felt some disgust at first for the new food offered me, though I found it good on trial; but the wine seemed to me horrid, and the face I made on tasting it amused my companion.

As we were eating he told me, first, that I must not call him Monsieur, nor even Franqueville; he was now to be called Brother Emilien, for Emilien was his Christian name. He had asked leave for Rosette to graze in the meadow, and to his great surprise it had not been granted him. Père Fructueux had given him a number of reasons that Emilien could not understand, and then, seeing that he was disappointed, had told him to give me something to eat whenever he liked. On that, without waiting to be told twice, Brother Emilien had put his dinner in a basket, and had hurried off to the house that I had showed him the night before. He found nobody at home but an old woman, who, I knew by his description, must be Mariotte. She told him where he was likely to find me, and also told him that my name was Nanette Surgeon. He found his way straight to the place, and seemed accustomed to mountain walking. In short, as I found afterward, he

was more of a peasant than a *monsieur*. He had been taught nothing; everything he knew he had learned of himself. He had not been allowed to hunt like other country gentlemen, so that he had become a sort of poacher on his own lands. He was skilled in killing hares and partridges, but as this was a forbidden occupation, he gave them away to the peasants on his father's estate, who taught him how to set snares and kept his secret for him He learned to swim with them, to ride, to climb trees, and even to do agricultural labor, for he was strong, — though he seemed frail to look at until you knew him.

It can easily be believed that what I here say touching the character and history of Emilien was not all told me on that day, nor on that spot. I should not have understood one quarter of it then; it took me years fully to learn all that I now set down for you.

Emilien de Franqueville had been born intelligent and persevering. In order to keep him from aspiring to a leading place in his family, they had tried to kill his soul and cage his intellect. His brother was apparently not so gifted as himself, but he was the elder, and in the Franqueville family all younger sons had always taken orders. It was a rule without an exception, — a rule strictly transmitted from father to son. The marquis, the father of Emilien, thought highly of the arrangement. It was a part of the law of order which supplemented the laws of the State. He said it simplified matters of succession, in which lawyers, when they had anything to do with them, always stirred up contention, and then found a chance to help themselves. A lad portioned off and put into a cloister had no further claims upon his family; he would have no one to come after him, so he would leave no law disputes behind. In short, it was all settled, and little

Emilien hardly knew his right hand from his left before his destiny was impressed upon him as something inevitable.

It may be well imagined that he did not always submit tamely. But his revolts were so sharply and so promptly repressed that he entered upon his manhood dead to many things, while in others he was as unsophisticated at sixteen as a child of eight. They had given him for tutor a sort of imbecile, who had just enough capacity to understand that his main object must be to make his pupil as imbecile as himself. Not succeeding in this, for Emilien was naturally clever and full of sense, this man made believe to instruct and to take charge of his pupil, while all the time he left him wholly to his own devices. The lad barely knew how to read and write when he came into the Convent, but he had observed and pondered much after his own fashion, and had built up his own soul.

Emilien had given his heart to God, as those commonly do who have no other helper or friend; but the more his tutor tried to impress him with his own ideas of God, the more the pupil persisted in regarding his Creator in his own way. He never said a harsh word of the Church; he contented himself with looking upon her as after all an earthly institution, which might take too much on itself, and which might lawfully be blamed or criticised if it did not walk on the true path to heaven. What he said to me on the first day that we met, he thought all his life after. The Church, according to his idea of her, was set apart to make men love God, to console them in sorrow, and to help them in their troubles. He cared little for the rest; he never argued, he let people talk, and followed his own convictions. In short, in consequence of being neglected and left to himself while isolated from things external, he had

made himself a world out of his dreams, and had acquired a taste for independence and freedom. He never set up an opposition to other people, — he gave up to them at once, either from indifference or good nature; but he would not blindly adopt their ideas about anything, and made haste to escape from all restraint so soon as they were not watching him. Having been shorn of all that others love, he had learned to set a light value upon what had been denied him.

III.

When we had breakfasted, Emilien took a nap on the rock, which lay warm in the sunshine. He asked me when he waked up what I thought about when I was knitting, and watching my ewe.

"Generally," I said, "I think of fifty things that I don't remember afterward; but to-day I have been wondering about you. You must be able to do as you like with the monks, since they let you pass your time as you please and do just what you have a mind to?"

"I don't know that the monks will worry much about what I do with my time," he replied. "I hardly think they will. I shall bring them a nice little sum if I pronounce my vows, and they would rather not disgust me before they get my money. I have found that out. As for teaching me, they cannot care much about that, I know."

"Why so?"

"For a very simple reason. They know little more than I do; and if they do not spin out what they have to teach, it will soon be at an end."

"So you, too, despise the monks?"

"I don't despise them. I despise no one. They seem very kind; and if they are good to me, I shall not trouble them."

"Then you will come and see me sometimes in the fields?"

"I shall be glad to come, and I will bring you as much to eat as you like."

I grew red with vexation. "I don't want anything to eat," I said. "I have plenty at home, and I like our own chestnuts better than your pasties."

"Then is it only because you like to see me that you want me to come?"

"That is why. But if you think —"

"I don't think anything but what you tell me. You are a good little girl, and you put me in mind of my sister. I shall be glad to see you again."

From that day forward we met often. Emilien had perfectly anticipated how the monks of Valcreux would act toward him. They let him spend his time as he pleased, and only required him to take part in certain church services, which he did obediently. Very soon he made acquaintance with my two cousins, and one day he made us laugh by telling us how the Prior had sent for him to tell him that in consideration of his extreme youth he had thought fit to dispense with his attendance at matins.

"Just fancy," continued Emilien, — "I had the stupidity to thank him, and to tell him that having been always accustomed to get up by day-break, I would just as soon as not be present at matins. He persisted, and I persisted, thinking I was showing him my submission. It was a funny scene. At last brother Pamphilion nudged me, and I followed him into the garden, when he said: "My lad, if you are bent on going to matins, you will have to go alone, since for ten years past none of us have been to that service, and the Prior could not force us to do so now because he was the one who proposed excusing us from this unnecessary mortification." Then I asked him why they rang the chapel bell, and he replied that the ringer had to earn his bread, and was a poor fellow in the parish who did not know how to do anything else."

Jacques thought there was another reason. "The monks," he said, "are hypocrites. They want us all to think that they are saying their prayers, while they are fast asleep on their feather-beds."

Jacques never missed a chance of being hard upon the monks, and he made no scruple of telling Emilien that he ought to be ashamed of enlisting in such a lazy regiment. When my great-uncle heard him he made him hold his peace; but the Little Brother — that was the name we called Emilien — said to Père Jean, —

"Don't stop him; monks must expect to be judged like other men. I know them. I expect to live with them. I don't blame them, but I don't feel called upon to defend them. If their profession seems a useless one, it is their own fault."

When we were by ourselves we were constantly talking of the Little Brother. Our poor life was so seldom varied that the frequent visits of a new comer, and the hours that he sometimes passed with us, seemed great events. My cousin Pierre loved him heartily, and took his part against Jacques, who made small account of him. In that he was sustained by the opinion of my great-uncle, who blamed Emilien for not maintaining his rank, for forgetting that he was a Franqueville, and for not being as reserved as a future monk ought to be.

"He is light-minded," he said. "He 'll never make either a good monk or a good noble. There is no harm in him, — nay, he is very kind-hearted. He seems honest, he does not yet run after the girls, but he cares for nothing either in this world or the next; and if a man has no turn for the sword he must take to the altar."

"But who says he has no turn for the sword?" cried Pierre, excitedly. "He is afraid of nothing, and it is not

his fault if they did not make him a brave soldier instead of a puling monk."

I listened to all these opinions without knowing which to believe. I had at first fancied I should strike up a great friendship with the Little Brother, but he did not seem to think as much of me as I did of him. Always amiable, always obliging, always ready to spend his time as chance might guide him with the last new comer, he only remembered me when he happened to see me. I had fancied I might take the place of his little sister, and console him in his troubles. But he had no troubles to confide to me. He talked about himself to anybody without discrimination, and related the trials of his infancy without seeming to have taken them to heart. The general impression about his want of feeling owed its origin perhaps to a fixed smile, which grew more fixed when he talked about sad things, and which gave him an appearance of silly indifference. In short, he was not the child of *sacrifice* I had somehow imagined him, and I resumed my preference for Rosette, who always needed me, while he — he had no need of me or any one.

Winter, a hard winter; — the winter of 1788, — thus passed away, as well as the spring of 1789. We knew little about politics at Valcreux. We none of us knew how to read, and the greater part of us were in fact, if not in law, serfs of the Abbey. The monks did not worry us much about *corvées*, but they remitted nothing of their tithes, and as we always grumbled, they held as little talk with us as possible. If they knew what was going on in the world outside, they told us nothing. Our province was one of the quietest in France, and persons in the neighborhood who came on business to the Monastery

never stopped to talk to us. A peasant was of such little importance in those days!

The revolution had begun, but we did not know it. The news of the taking of the Bastille however reached us one market-day, and as it caused some emotion in the parish, I was anxious to learn what was the Bastille!

The explanations of my great-uncle did not satisfy me, because they were always contradicted by my cousins, — sometimes to his face, which much displeased him. I lay in wait therefore to question the Little Brother, and when I had managed to join him in his retreat among the bushes, I asked him — because I thought he must know more than we — to tell me why some people rejoiced and other people were troubled about the Bastille. I fancied the Bastille was some person they had put in prison.

"The Bastille," he said, "has been a frightful prison that the people in Paris have torn down."

Then, from a very revolutionary point of view, he explained to me the taking of the Bastille. In reply to my questions, he told me further that the monks of Valcreux considered the victory of the Parisians as a great misfortune. They said that all was lost, and were talking of repairing the breaches in the Convent walls as a defence against brigands.

Then ensued fresh questions upon my part. Emilien found some difficulty in answering them. He knew very little more than I.

It was near the end of July, and I had now known the Little Brother a year. I spoke my mind to him as I did to everybody else in the neighborhood, and I was annoyed that he was no better informed than the rest of us.

"It is strange," I cried, "that you know so little. You say that at home nobody taught you, but since you came

to the Convent to be educated, you ought at least to have learned how to read, and Jacques says you can't!"

"As Jacques can't read himself, he is no great judge."

"He says he brought a newspaper from town which you read so badly that he could not understand you."

"May be that was his own fault. But I won't tell a lie about it. I do read very badly, and I write like a cat."

"Can you do sums?"

"No, indeed! and I never shall. What's the use? I shall never own anything."

"When you are old enough you might become the Convent steward, when Père Fructueux is dead."

"Heaven forbid! I like to give. I hate refusing."

"My great-uncle says that by right of your high birth you might some day be the Superior."

"Well, I hope I shall never be fit for it."

"Why are you like that? It is a shame to stay ignorant when one might learn. Now, if I had the chance I would learn everything."

"*Everything?* — would that satisfy you? And why would you like to know such a lot of things?"

"I cannot tell you. I have a fancy for knowing. When I see anything in writing I feel mad to think that I cannot read it."

"Would you like me to teach you to read?"

"But you can't!"

"I can read a little. I should learn more while I taught you."

"Ah, so you say! but you will forget all about it to-morrow. You are very changeable."

"Come now! You scold me a great deal to-day, *petite* Nanon. Are we not good friends?"

"Of course we are, though sometimes I wonder if one

can be great friends with any one who does not care muc either for himself or for others."

He looked at me with his careless smile. But he mad me no answer, and went away looking straight before hir and not at the hedgerows, as he generally did, to see if h could find a bird's nest. Possibly he was thinking abou what I had said.

Two or three days after that, as I was pasturing m sheep with children of my own age, Mariotte and five o six other women rushed up the hill in a great fright, an told us to come home directly.

"What 's the matter?"

"Make haste! come home! Bring back your sheep Make haste! you have no time to lose."

We got frightened in our turn. Every one of us go together his little flock, and I led off Rosette, who wa not pleased to go, for it was not her time for leaving th pasture.

I found my great-uncle very anxious about me. H took me by the arm and pushed me and Rosette into th cottage. Then he told my cousins to shut everything u tight, and to put bars to all the openings. They too wer scared, though they thought the danger was not pressing.

"Yes, but the danger is there," said my great-uncle when we were all shut in together. "Now that we are a four safe, we must make up our minds what to do. An this is my advice: So long as daylight lasts we can d nothing, we must trust in God; but when night comes w must seek shelter in the Monastery, and every one mus carry with him all he has, — his goods and his provisions.

"Do you believe," said Jacques, "that the monks wi take in all the parish?"

"They have got to do it! We are their subjects; w

owe them tithes and obedience, and they owe us protection and asylum."

Pierre, who was more scared than his elder brother, sided this time with his grandfather. The Monastery was fortified, he said, and with the help of a few stout fellows the weak places could be defended. Jacques, though he persisted that it was labor lost, began to take down our poor beds. I collected my kitchen things, — four bowls and two earthen porringers.

Our house linen did not make a big bundle, nor did our clothes.

"Oh! I only hope," I cried, "that the monks will let me bring in Rosette."

Meantime, knowing nothing and not daring to ask questions, I obeyed mechanically all orders that were given me. After a while I found that a band of brigands were expected; that they killed everybody, and burned all the houses. Then I began to cry, not because I feared for my own life (for at that time I had very little conception of death), but for grief at the thought of abandoning our poor cottage to the flames, — for it was as dear to me as if it had belonged to us. In this I was not more foolish than Père Jean and his grandsons, who grieved over the loss of their poor bits of things much more than they did over their personal danger.

The day passed in the dark with our house tightly closed, and we ate no supper. To cook our vegetables we must have lighted a fire, and Père Jean would not let us do this, saying that the smoke would betray us. If the brigands came, he said, they had better fancy the place abandoned, and all the houses empty. In that case they might not stop, but go on to the Monastery.

After dark Jacques and he decided to go down the

ravine and knock at the door of the Convent; but it had been closed all day, and was closed still. They could not get anybody to open it. Nobody would even speak to them through the wicket. It seemed as if the Monastery were deserted.

"You see," said Jacques, when they came home, "that the monks don't choose to let in anybody. They know that people about here do not love them. They are as much afraid of those in their own parish as of the brigands."

"It seems to me," said my uncle, "that they must be hiding underground, and if so, they could not hear us knocking."

"I wonder," said Pierre, "that the Little Brother should have hidden himself like the rest of them. He is not timid! I should have thought he would come here to defend us, or that he would have taken us into the Monastery."

"Your Little Brother is as pigeon-hearted as the rest," said Jacques, who was as frightened as anybody.

My great-uncle then expressed a wish to find out if there was any news in the neighborhood, and if any steps had been taken to meet the common danger. He therefore set out again with Jacques, both barefoot, creeping along under the shadow of the bushes as if they had been brigands themselves on an errand of evil.

Pierre and I remained alone, with orders to stay on the doorstep, to keep our ears open, and to be ready to take flight if we heard any alarming noise.

It was a splendid night. The heavens were full of brilliant stars, the air was fragrant, and though we listened, not a sound of anything amiss came to our ears. In all the houses along the edge of the ravine, nearly every one of which stood by itself, everybody had done as we had

done. They had closed their doors, put out their fires, and spoke in whispers. It was only nine o'clock, yet everything was as still as midnight, — though no one slept that night. All were paralyzed by fear; they hardly dared to breathe. The remembrance of that panic still lingers in those parts as the most striking feature of the Revolution. They still talk of what they call "the year of the great scare."

Nothing stirred in the chestnut-trees under whose shadow we lay. The quiet without communicated itself by degrees to our own minds, and we began to chat in whispers. We did not feel hungry, but we grew sleepy. Pierre stretched himself at full length on the grass, talked a little about the stars, told me they were not in the same places all the year at the same hours of the night, and at last went sound asleep where he lay.

I had not the heart to wake him. I thought I could keep watch alone, but I doubt if I did so for many minutes.

I was awakened by a foot which struck against me in the darkness, and opening my eyes I saw what seemed a gray ghost leaning over me. I had barely time to be frightened; the ghost's voice reassured me, — it was that of the Little Brother.

"What are you doing here, Nanon?" he said. "Why are you sleeping outdoors on the bare ground? I came near stepping upon you."

"Have the brigands come?" I asked, rising.

"The brigands! There are no brigands, my poor little Nanette. So you too have fancied they were coming?"

"Why — yes. How do you know that they are not?"

"Because the monks make fun of them, and say that

it is a scare got up to disgust the peasants with the Revolution."

"Then it is a trap? Oh, if that 's all I will fix Rosette, and get ready supper by the time my great-uncle comes home."

"Is he abroad?"

"Yes. He went to see some of the neighbors, and to consult whether to fight or hide."

"He won't find their doors open, and no one will let him in. That's what happened to me. As soon as I found out that there was nothing to fear I got out of the Convent by a hole in the wall, and came to reassure our friends in the village; but you are the first creature I have found to speak to. Are you all alone?"

"No; there 's Pierre as fast asleep as if he were in bed."

"Ah! so he is. Now I see him. Well, since he is so quiet, we will let him alone. I 'll help you to attend to your sheep and light your fire."

I asked him what houses he had knocked at before he came to ours. He mentioned half-a-dozen.

"Ah!" I said, "you thought of us last. If anybody had let you in, would you have stayed and talked there?"

"No. I came out to warn everybody. But you should n't quarrel with me, Nanon. I meant to come here, and I think about you more than you imagine. I have thought about you a great deal ever since the other day when you said sharp things to me."

"Did they make you mad with me?"

"No. I was vexed with myself. I see I deserved what has been thought about me. I have made a resolution to learn all that the monks will teach me."

"That is right! and then will you teach me?"

"That 's a bargain."

As the fire blazed up and lighted the chamber, Emilien saw our wooden bedsteads and our bedding piled in the middle of the floor.

"Where are you to sleep?" he said.

"Oh," I answered, "I will go and sleep with Rosette now that I fear nothing. My cousins don't mind spending a night in the open air; it is only my poor old uncle who will find it hard. I wish I were strong enough to set up his bedstead, for he will sleep soundly when he knows that the brigands are not coming."

"If you are not strong enough, I am."

So he set to work. In a short time he had set up and put together Père Jean's bed and my little pallet. I put the supper things on the table, and the vegetable soup smoked in the bowls when my uncle hurried in with Jacques. They had not been able to make any one hear, and they came back at full speed, for they had seen our smoke, and thought the cottage was on fire. They expected to find us all dead, — Pierre, Rosette, and me.

They were glad to find some supper, and to be able to sleep without fear, and at first they could not sufficiently thank the Little Brother. But my great-uncle, as he ate, became anxious once more. When the Little Brother was gone Père Jean observed that he was but a child, that perhaps he had not understood what the monks were talking about, and that since everybody was afraid, there must be danger somewhere. He declined to go to bed, and while we all slept he kept watch, sitting on the stone bench in the chimney-corner.

The next day everybody found themselves, much to their own surprise, safe and sound. But the boys of the parish climbed the biggest trees in the ravine, and saw in the distance bodies of men marching in ranks through the

early fog. Then they all ran home, and everybody talked of abandoning everything, and of our hiding ourselves in the woods or clefts of the rocks. But soon there came messengers, who had hard work to make themselves listened to, for at first they were taken for enemies, and our people wanted to drive them off with stones. They were simply men from the neighboring villages, and when they were recognized, all our friends pressed round them. They told us that on learning that the brigands were approaching (a piece of news not doubted in their villages, nor elsewhere) they had agreed to combine for self-defence. They had got such arms together as they could, and had formed parties to patrol the country and arrest evil-doers. They expected us to get arms too, and join the other parishes.

None of us cared much to do this. They were told that we had no arms, and that furthermore the monks did not believe in the brigands, for the Little Brother was among our men, and without betraying the real feeling among the monks, he tried to make them understand the truth. But big Repoussat from Foudrasse, and the one-eyed man from Bajadoux, both turbulent fellows, laughed, and made game of us for being so cowed.

"It is easy enough to see," said they, "that you are the monks' children, and that your own fear has as much effect upon you as their inventions. Your hypocrites of masters want to give the land up to the brigands, and to keep you from defending it; but if you had any spirit you would be already armed. There are weapons enough in the Monastery for you and your neighbors. There are provisions there too, in case of a siege. Well, well! we shall go back to our comrades and tell them of your cowardice, and then we will all come in battle-array and seize the

Convent and the arms, since you don't want them, and could n't use them if you had them."

These words were like a spark in straw. We began to fear our neighbors more than the brigands, and it was decided very tumultuously that we would be masters in our own house, and manage the affairs of our own parish. Every one was summoned, and all met on the open space before the Monastery, — a grassy rolling slope, with a fountain that worked miracles in the middle of it. Big Repoussat, who claimed the honor of having roused our courage, began by saying that we must first of all strike terror into the monks, by breaking the statue of the Lady of the Fountain. My uncle who was present grew very angry. He was still of opinion that we ought to claim the protection of the Convent, and go into it for shelter; but he would have no profanation, and he cried out that old as he was he would split any man's head open with his spade who did anything foolish or disorderly. He was listened to, because he was the oldest man in the parish and greatly esteemed.

Meantime the Little Brother, having full knowledge of what was passing, got back into the Convent through breaches that he knew better than anybody. He found the monks dreadfully frightened, and thinking of nothing but putting up barricades. He convinced them that their own peasants were more friendly to them than those from other villages, and that the best thing to be done was now to trust them.

IV.

THEN the doors of the Monastery were opened to a dozen of the most reasonable of the parishioners, and they were shown through all the rooms to prove to them that there were neither cannon, swords, nor muskets there; but little Anguilloux, who had helped the masons when they repaired the wine-cellar, said that he had seen plenty of arms in the vaults of the Monastery, — and there in fact our men found a quantity of old arquebuses not fit for service, match-locks of the time of the Wars of Religion, and a number of rusty partisans without their staves. They took possession of all these, and carried them out on to the open space, where everybody appropriated what he pleased. The arquebuses and the muskets were good for nothing, but the pike-heads were perfect, and their new owners began at once to rub them bright, and to cut staves for them in the woods of the Monastery. That was the only mischief done. The monks promised us an asylum in case of attack, and pointed out to each family where it might install itself. The two strangers were dismissed. We did not care to share with them the security of our Convent. When they were gone the parishioners became good friends with the monks, but they kept the arms, — many of our men laughing and saying one to another that if the monks had conspired to frighten us, they had played their cards ill, and had armed their peasants against themselves in case of need.

For three days and three nights all the village was afoot, mounting guard, patrolling the ravine, watching by turns, and every now and then exchanging greetings with other bands that were fallen in with. This scare, which was the invention of nobody knew who (indeed, I think it never has been known), did not turn out to be all a joke, however. Our peasants became older than if the three days had been years. Forced to go out of their own homes, to take counsel one with another, to seek for news and to learn what was said beyond their own ravine, they began to understand something about the Bastille, the war, the famine, the King, and the National Assembly. I learned these things in the rough then, like others, and it seemed to me as if my mind had hitherto been caged and was now soaring into a wider country. We had known fear, and the experience made us braver. Notwithstanding on the third day, as we were beginning to recover, there was another alarm. Some horsemen had ridden at full gallop through the neighboring villages, crying "To arms!" and announcing that the brigands were reaping the crops and killing the peasantry. This time my great-uncle took his scythe, to which he added a pike, and went off with his two boys to meet the enemy, putting me under the care of Mariotte, and addressing those who stayed behind in these words:—

"We are going out to fight. If we get the worst of it, don't expect to see us come back here with the enemy at our heels. Take no heed of the beasts, but gather together the children and hide yourselves. The brigands show no mercy."

Mariotte screamed, wept, and began hunting for a hiding-place for her things. As for me, though I might still believe in brigands, I no longer dreaded them. I was full

of enthusiasm. I said to myself that if my uncle and my cousins should be killed, there would be no use for me to live; and leaving Mariotte occupied with her new anxieties, I took Rosette and led her off into the fields. Was I to let her die of hunger in order to save her from the robbers?

The wish to know what was going on took me some distance along the great plateau covered with trees; but I could see nothing, because the bands of peasants who were abroad scouted with precaution, creeping through the broom among the gorges. While trying to see something through the trees, my view was suddenly darkened by some one rising from the brushwood; it was the Little Brother quietly out hunting, and on the look-out for foxes, without paying any regard to the war or to the brigands.

"I should have thought," I said, "that you would have been out with the rest, to see at least if there is any danger."

"I know," he replied, "that there is no danger for any one except the higher clergy and the nobles, neither of whom will have anything to do with me. I am therefore all alone in the world, with only myself to care for."

"I cannot bear to hear you talk like that. I never know whether to despise or pity you."

"Neither, *ma petite amie.* Give me a duty and I will do my best to perform it; but I cannot see the duty of a monk, — unless to grow fat be a duty. The monks, you see, may have been all well enough in the old times, but as soon as they grew rich, and at their ease, they became of no more use to God or men."

"Well, then, don't be a monk."

"That is easy to say. Who will shelter me, who will

support me, — for my family will give me up, of course, if I oppose them."

"*Dame!* you can work. Ours is a hard life; but Pierre and Jacques hire out by the day, and they are better off than you are."

"I am not quite sure of that. They think of nothing, and I take great pleasure in thinking to myself. I know that I have much to learn before I can reason rightly, but I shall do it in the end. You said the truth, — it is cowardly to be lazy. *Tiens*, see! nowadays I carry a book when I am outdoors, and I often open it."

"And how about teaching me! Have you forgotten your promise?"

"I will teach you. Will you begin immediately?"

"Yes; at once."

He gave me my first lesson, sitting on the fern beside me, under an open sky which dazzled my eyes, for I was only used to the small strip of blue which could be seen in our narrow valley. I paid such attention that I soon had a headache; but I did not choose, for pride's sake, to complain. I was proud to feel that I could learn, and the Little Brother was amazed to see me get on so well. He said I learned more in an hour than he could in a week.

"That may be," I said, "because you were taught badly."

"Or perhaps," he replied, "because they preferred that I should not learn."

He went off after a while, killed a hare and brought it back to me.

"This," he said, "is for your uncle's supper, and you cannot refuse to take it."

"But it is the monks' game!"

"If it is, it is mine, and I have a right to give it away."

"Thank you. But I would like to have something besides for myself, — and I don't care about eating."

"What is it?"

"I would like to know all my letters to-day. I am rested; you are not very tired — "

"Come on; I am willing," he said.

The sun was sinking, and I had more command of myself. I learned all my alphabet that day, and as we walked home I enjoyed the songs of the thrush and the ripple of the river. Rosette marched on before us as good as gold, and the Little Brother held me by the hand. The sun was sinking on our right; the chestnut woods and beeches seemed on fire. The meadows were all aglow, and when we caught sight of the river it seemed a flood of gold. It was the first time I had taken notice of such things, and I told the Little Brother that it seemed all so *strange* to me.

"What do you mean by that?" he said.

"I mean that the sun is like a bonfire; that the water is like the gilded Virgin at the Monastery. Things never looked like that until to-day."

"They are like that, though, every time the sun sets in fine weather."

"But Père Jean says that when the sky is red it means war."

"There are no lack of signs of war, my poor Nanon."

I did not ask him to explain himself: I was preoccupied. My dazzled eyes saw red letters and blue in the glow of the setting sun.

"Does Heaven thus give me," I thought, "a sign that I shall read, after all?"

A thrush went on with her sweet singing, and seemed to follow us through the brushwood. I fancied that she had a message to me from God, and was making me sweet promises. I asked my companion if he knew what the birds said when they sang.

"Yes," he said; "I know."

"Well, what does that thrush say?"

"She says that she has wings, that she is happy, and that God is good to little birds."

We chatted thus as we went down the ravine, while France was arming, though we did not know it, and armies were making ready for battle.

At night my people came back, and I served up the hare, which was pronounced very good. They had not seen any brigands; and people were beginning to say that either there had been none at all, or that they would not think of coming near us. The next day we still stood on the defensive; but the day after, the men all went to work again. The women who had hid their children brought them out, the house-linen and the little bits of silver they had buried were disinterred; all was as quiet as it had been before. They were well satisfied with the Little Brother, who by speaking a word in season to the monks had hindered any rupture between them and the parish; the impression was that the Convent would rule over us a long while still, and nobody wished to incur the monks' anger. They did not show any. It was thought that the Little Brother had brought them to see things reasonably. It was observed that he had always disbelieved the rumors about brigands, and people began to think more of him than they had done before.

Every day I met him somewhere. He taught me to read in the open air so well and so fast that everybody

marvelled, and I was talked of in the parish as a little wonder. I was proud of myself, but not vain of my superiority over others. I taught Pierre a little; he wanted to learn, but was very stupid. I also taught some of my little comrades, who made me presents in return; and my great-uncle prophesied that I should become the school-mistress of the parish, much in the same tone in which he might have said I should one day become a queen.

Though the villagers had organized a national guard, things had fallen back into their old train. The winter passed quietly. We had dreaded cold as severe as that of the year before, and as we had grown bolder, in December our men cut wood in the forests of the Monastery, with or without permission. They did not steal it; they took it all to the wood-shed of the monks, saying that now they could not say as they had done the year before, that firewood was too scarce in case we needed shelter. The poor monks might, had they pleased, have punished us severely; for the greater part of us were still their serfs. We had been told, to be sure, that serfdom had been abolished since August, even on Church lands; but as the decree was not published, and as the monks did not show signs of having heard of it, we thought it might be false news, like that about the brigands.

One fine morning in March, 1790, the Little Brother came to our house and said: —

"My friends, you are freemen! They have at last decided to publish and to execute the decree of last year which abolishes serfdom in all France. Now you will get pay for your labor, and you can make your own bargains. There are no more tithes, no more dues, no more forced labor. The Monastery is no longer your creditor, nor

your feudal lord; and very soon it will no longer have any property."

Jacques smiled, without believing what he heard; Pierre shook his head, and did not understand; but Père Jean understood perfectly, and I thought he was going to drop as if he had received a blow. The Little Brother seeing he grew pale, fancied it was from sudden joy, and swore to him the news was true, since officers had come that very morning to notify the monks that their property was the property of the nation. It was not to be taken from them all at once, but at a certain time fixed upon by the State, which intended to make up their losses by giving them for some years the income of their property.

My great-uncle said not a word; but I, who knew him well, saw that he was in great trouble, and that he did not like to hear of such new things. After a while he spoke.

"My children," he said, "this is the end of all things. When we shall have no masters we cannot live. Do not fancy that I love the monks. They did not do their duty by us; but we had the right to force them to do it, and in time of trouble they would have been obliged to lend us aid. You saw that yourselves, in the matter of the brigands; they dared not refuse you arms. And now who will reign in the Monastery? Those who buy it will not care for us, and will owe us nothing. Suppose the brigands really come, where shall we seek shelter? We are cast off, and must now shift for ourselves."

"And all the better for us," said Jacques. "If this thing is true, we ought to be glad of it, now that we have the courage that we did not dare to have before, and arms which we never thought we should have had."

"And besides," resumed the Little Brother, turning to

my uncle, "there is a certain want of knowledge in what you say, dear Père Jean. You could not enforce your rights. You could not oblige the Convent to defend you. Some day or other it would have given you up, either from fear or weakness; and you would then have had to revolt, and perhaps have come to blows. The new law saves you from that misfortune."

My uncle seemed to give in to these good reasons; but he was very full of pity for the monks and their coming poverty. The Little Brother told him that they would be rather better off for the change, as there was a project on foot to despoil the bishops and high clergy in order to indemnify the religious orders, and to give better remuneration to the clergy of country parishes.

"I quite understand," replied my uncle, "that they will have good salaries, which may be better for them than their poor farming, or the dues and tithes which were so badly paid; but do you count for nothing the shame and pain of being no longer masters or landlords? I have always considered him who owns land as higher than he who owns money."

That day my uncle, who had been in good favor with the monks ever since he had saved the Blessed Lady of the miraculous fountain (this Blessed Lady brought them many offerings in provisions and money), wished to go and ascertain from the monks themselves if the news was true. He went down to the Monastery, and found it in great commotion. The Prior had had a stroke of apoplexy. He died that night, and my uncle was very much overcome by the news. The old cannot see each other depart without a pang. He began to feel himself sick, he would not eat, and seemed indifferent to what was said around him.

All the parish was in a state of happy excitement, the young people especially. They comprehended, if not the happiness of emancipation, — for no one knew how things would turn out in the end, — at least the honor of being "freemen," as the Little Brother called them. My poor great-uncle had been so long a serf that he could not feel reconciled to any other life, or to any other ways. He wondered at it all, and worried himself so much that he died a week after the Prior. He was greatly regretted, as every just and patient man should be who has suffered much and toiled faithfully without a murmur. My two cousins wept three whole days for him with all their hearts, and then they went back to their work with dutiful submission to the will of God.

As for me, I was not reasonable enough to console myself so speedily, and I grieved so long that people wondered at me and blamed me. Mariotte scolded me when she saw me crying as I watched my sheep, or when she found that I seemed to interest myself in nothing. She told me that I liked to think differently from other people, — that poor folks, such as we, were born to sorrow, and ought to learn to show great courage in misfortune, and not make the most of our troubles.

"Oh! but," I cried, "I never before have had a grief. I am not tender about myself; hunger and cold have never affected me. I rarely feel fatigue, and I can even say that I do not suffer from things that come hard to others; but I never thought about my uncle's dying! I was used to see him old, and I took such good care of him that he seemed to like to live. He seldom spoke to me; but he used to smile. He never cast up against me that I had fallen to his care; and yet he worked so hard for me! When I think of him I burst out crying; and

indeed I cannot help it, for I cry in my sleep, and wake up in the morning with my face wet with tears."

The Little Brother was the only person who did not seem to disapprove of my long grief. On the contrary, though he told me I was not like other people, he added that he thought all the more of me.

"But it may be a great misfortune for you," he said, "that you have so great a power of loving. Your love may not be paid back to you as you deserve."

Every day he came to our house, or else he joined me in the fields, whither I almost always went alone. The gayety of the children of my own age saddened me, and my sadness wearied them. With Emilien I endeavored to cheer up, for he seemed to try so hard to comfort me. I became seriously attached to him. He seemed to fill the place of him whom I had lost, and I soon saw that though I might not perfectly comprehend all his ideas, nor fathom his character, that one thing at least I could be certain of; namely, the great charity that lay latent in his soul.

V.

I WENT on living with my cousins, and taking care of their poor house as best I might. But as they were often absent at night when their work lay at a distance, Mariotte had my little bed brought over to her house, that I might not be alone. She was very glad to have me; for she was alone too, being a widow, with children married in another village.

She had *gumption* (called *de l'idée* among us), and she taught me to have it too. That is to say, though she was very poor, she knew how to make the best of things, both by her good sense and by her industry. She never wasted anything, nor failed to turn it to some good account. There are some others, who with next to nothing in their houses, and next to nothing to wear, manage to keep themselves tidy, and never seem to be hopelessly poor. The greater part of our women, even those who were the best off, never made the most of what they had, and often found themselves in need because they had not looked out for themselves beforehand, but had let things go to ruin.

I went on learning from Mariotte, and learning too from the Little Brother. I began to know how to write and how to cipher a little. Among the neighbors I was held to be a little prodigy, and they were astonished that the Little Brother — always accounted to be light-minded, and to love nothing but hunting and fishing — should keep on

so perseveringly teaching me. My little knowledge was like a great gift to me; for I began to have scholars of my own during the winter evenings, and when our villagers had papers to be read they came to me, — for all which services I received little presents. They could have asked the Little Brother to read to them just as well, and he would willingly have helped them; but peasants are naturally mistrustful. Because he belonged to the Convent and was of noble birth, they would not confide in him as they did in me, — a girl of their own race and of their own village.

The lands of the Convent had been put up for sale; but notwithstanding the great wish everybody had to purchase them, nobody dared to stand forward as a buyer. We were afraid the law would not last; and the monks made fun of it, saying, It will never be carried into effect! Besides, the nation being in need of money, gave only three months' credit. That was not sufficient for peasants poor as we were; and speculators, who are generally ready enough to buy to sell again, thought it was too early to risk anything.

Nevertheless confidence at last came, and came suddenly, I hardly know why; but it was after the Fête of July 14, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille. All France joined in this fête, which was called the Feast of the Federation. The Little Brother explained to me that it was held in honor of there being thenceforward but one system of law throughout France, and he made me understand that from that time forth we were all children of one country. He seemed happier than I had ever seen him, and his joy communicated itself to my heart; though I knew very little, and was not fit to pass judgment upon what had happened.

The fête was a great wonder in our wild parish, buried as it was in the mountains. But we no longer said *parish;* we said our *commune*, now that we belonged no longer to the monks, and had elected municipal officers. The monks looked on, and either from stupidity or from scorn (it was never known which) they professed themselves quite satisfied with all that was done. There were two young men among them — both older, however, than the Little Brother, for they had taken the vows — who appeared very tired of their condition, and wanted to get out of it as soon as they knew that such a step was possible. The day of the fête the old monks were persuaded to open the gates of their Monastery to the municipality and to the villagers, that the Fête of the Federation might be celebrated in an open space, near which we might find shelter should there be a storm. The old monks consented, fearing that if they refused there might be some disturbance. So a mass was said to ask God to bless French unity; and they even offered to contribute, as far as they could, to the banquet that was to be held in their courtyard. Poor banquet, at which the guests ate white bread for dessert, as rich folks might have eaten cake on such an occasion! Every one brought his own porridge and his own vegetables. They had subscribed to get a little wine, which was drunk after the water and the plum cider of the country. But when the banquet reached this stage a surprise was disclosed to us, which the Little Brother, with the help of Jacques and other smart lads of the village, had got up for the occasion. It had been known that something was in preparation, for they had been working at it for three days; and now we saw a great pile of green faggots cut, with all their leaves, and covering something that lay beneath them. When the wine was

brought forward, they fired off ten or twelve muskets that were owned in the commune; and the lads having pulled down the pile of faggots, we saw a sort of turf altar, with a cross on top of it made of wheat-ears arranged in bunches. Underneath were flowers and the finest fruits they could procure. The Little Brother had taken the liberty of getting fruits and flowers from the flower-beds and *espaliers* of the Monastery. There were also rare vegetables from the same place, in addition to more common things, — sheaves of buckwheat, chestnut-boughs with their green burrs, branches of plum-trees, holly-bushes, and wild medlars; in short, some of all those things that the earth brings forth without culture to be a blessing to the children of the poor and to the little birds. Besides these, at the foot of the altar lay a plough, a spade, a pick-axe, a sickle, a scythe, an axe, a cart-wheel, chains, ropes, horseshoes, a harness, a rake, and a weeding hook; likewise a pair of chickens, a yearling lamb, a pair of pigeons, and several nests of thrushes, larks, and sparrows, with eggs or little nestlings.

I suppose you will say it was a very homely trophy; but it was so well arranged, with its green moss, its flowers, and its great branches of water-weeds ornamenting and framing everything, that it impressed us all immensely, and it seemed to me the most magnificent thing I had ever beheld. Even now that I am old, I cannot smile at it. The peasant who is too apt to look with indifference upon all around him needs to have his attention called to every-day things, which may interest his thoughts while they amuse his eyes and concentrate his ideas, as is done by any sort of spectacle.

There was deep silence when the altar was first seen. Perhaps those present had expected something more out

of the common; but it pleased them all, even those who did not understand its meaning. I understood a little more. I knew how to read; and I read the inscription at the bottom of the cross of wheat-ears. But I did not read it aloud. I shrank back into myself. I was very far from expecting that I was yet to play an important part in the ceremony.

All of a sudden the Little Brother took me by the arm. I was not at the great table; there was not room at it for everybody, and I was sitting on the turf with the little children. He took me in front of the altar, and told me to read aloud what was written on it. I did so, and every one around us held his breath to hear: —

"This is an altar raised by grateful poverty; whose labor, blessed by Heaven, shall from this time forward have its earthly reward."

Then one long "Ah!" came from all lips at once, like a free breath after so many years of slavery. All felt that thenceforward they were endowed with rights of property in wheat-ears, fruits, and domestic animals; in short, that all things that the earth brings forth they were at liberty to own. They flung themselves into one another's arms weeping, and saying words of which they were hardly aware.

One old man took up a little vessel of wine (it was his own share), and said that he would rather consecrate it than drink it. He poured it over the altar, and many others did the same; for a belief in libations has not died out in our part of the country. The monks stood by, and saying that they did not wish it to be a pagan ceremony, they apparently blessed the altar; but afterward they spread a report that the whole parish had been drunk at the festivity.

Yes, drunk! — but not with wine: there was barely enough wine left to wet men's lips after the libations. We were drunk with joy, with hope, with a new sense of brotherhood. The monks were suffered, if they pleased, to sprinkle us with holy water; we even pledged them in our scanty wine-cups. No one wished harm to them; but no one trusted them. We could hate no one on that day; besides, for love of the Little Brother no one would have done wrong to his community.

When we grew calmer, the critics (they never fail) said that one thing was lacking to this altar; namely, a living Christian, with a soul higher than that of the creatures that were gathered there.

"Right!" cried the Little Brother. "Let all the mothers here present bring up their children, and let them lay their hands upon the altar of their country; but on these steps of turf there is needed, besides, the figure of an angel praying for the poor. I will choose one, and if you are not all satisfied with my choice, you can tell me why."

So saying he took me by one hand, while with his other arm he gently pushed me toward the altar; for I offered some resistance. He made me kneel upon the highest step, beneath the cross of wheat-ears. Every one was surprised; but nobody was displeased, for all felt kindly toward me. But peasants love to have all things explained to them; so the Little Brother made them a brief address, which was another surprise, — for he was no great talker, and when he had given his opinion in a few words, whether it was accepted or not he seemed to care very little. But this time he apparently wished to convince his hearers; for he talked a good while, and among other things he said was this: —

"My friends, I ask myself as you have done, what things in a Christian soul are the most pleasing to God; and I feel that they are courage, meekness, respect for parents, and the power of loving. The little girl whom I have placed here is the poorest child among you, and yet she has never asked help from any one. She took good care of her great-uncle while living; she mourned him tenderly when he was dead. Her care and her grief were both remarkable. She is not fourteen, yet she does the work of a woman. Nor is that all; she has something else that God loves when it is rightly employed: she has ability, and she learns fast and thoroughly whatever she can. What she knows she does not keep to herself; she tries to teach it to others. Nor does she choose out those who can reward her; she takes as much pains to teach the poor as those who can afford to pay her. A year from now, if you will second her, many of your children will read, and be of great use to you; for what keeps down your prosperity is that you cannot make out the meaning of those papers to which you affix your mark, and therefore you often miss good opportunities of improving your condition."

Every one knew that this alluded to our reluctance to acquire the public lands. They were already disposed to belief at that moment, and they believed him. They could understand him when he was speaking about me, and a great shout of approbation and applause arose. It amazed me. I thought how pleased our dear Père Jean would have been to see the people make so much of me, and I could hardly keep from tears.

When they saw that instead of being vain-glorious, I was embarrassed and not self-conceited, they were pleased with me. Nobody had anything to say against me, and

a new notion came into the head of old Girot, who, now that his early friend my great-uncle was dead, was the oldest man in the commune. For this reason they had made him chairman of the feast, and put into the button-hole of his felt vest a bouquet of wheat-ears and flowers.

"Children," he said, climbing up on a big stone to be better heard, "I think the Little Brother has chosen well, and has spoken well; and if you follow my advice, we will do the little girl all the good that is in our power. Her house belongs to the Monastery; we will buy it, and let her have it, and the little garden around it too. If we subscribe according to our means, it will not be much for each one of us, and it will be a sort of first step in that matter we have spoken of. It will be our first purchase of national property; and if by and by any one blames us, we can say that we did it for the love of God, and not for our own good."

Everybody approved; and our mayor, Père Chénot, the richest peasant in the commune, wrote down the names of the subscribers. Some gave two sous, and some gave two and three francs. The mayor himself gave five, and the thing was soon accomplished. The gift was made to me alone, though I was under age. Chénot undertook to be my guardian in all that concerned my property. For notwithstanding the high esteem felt for my cousins, the donors did not care to put what belonged to me into their hands. I asked at once if I should have the right to give them lodging, because I would rather not have anything than to turn them out of their home. I was told that I could keep them as long as I pleased, and my benefactors added that my kind feelings made them glad that they had done well by me. I kissed the mayor and council, and the old people. Then a dance was pro-

posed; some one pinned a bunch of flowers on my cap, and Père Girot, who could barely totter, wanted to open the dance with me. I could dance well enough; but because of my late loss I did not want to be gay. They all told me, however, that I must dance, and said that this fête was not like a common one. It was something that we had never seen before, and might never see again, — a day to make the very dead feel glad; and they said that if Père Jean had been there, he, as the oldest person present, would have had to dance with the first purchaser, *la première acquéreuse.*

So I had to yield; but in two minutes Père Girot had had enough of it, and I gladly made my escape, for I thought, "They say my great-uncle would have been pleased had he been here: they know not that he died of grief because he could not sympathize with what so gladdens them."

I ran home, and fell down on my knees at my uncle's bed. It had never been occupied since he died, and its curtains of yellow serge had stayed closed since he was lifted out of it for the last time. My mind was in commotion. I feared it might be wrong to accept what he would never have bought, and maybe would not have taken had it been offered him. But on the other hand, I said to myself, "The Little Brother knows more about it than my uncle did; and he says it is the duty of the poor to come out of their poverty, and so to please God, who loves us to be strong and of good courage."

After having pondered this as best I might, I came to the conclusion that I had better accept what had been so cordially and kindly given me. I remembered too that this purchase was an experiment, and that I had no right to decline to let my friends carry it out. Then having made

up my mind, I turned for the first time on the old buildi
a glance of interest and of wonder. It was very old, b
very solid. The fireplace was built outside the wall, wit
a pointed arch and stone seats in the chimney corne
The rafters were black with age, and the ill-joined wood
work let in snow and rain in many places. That was my
cousins' fault; for with a few boards and a little labor
they might have remedied it. Their grandfather had
often told them to attend to it; but they were of the
many who say they are going to set things right, yet
never take the trouble to prevent their falling to pieces.
It seemed to me that I should have the *right*, if I gave
them lodging in my house, to require them to make the
necessary repairs for their own comfort and mine.

"My house!" I kept on saying to myself, half wondering if it were a dream. It had been said, when the subscription was being raised, that with the garden it was worth one hundred francs. A hundred francs! it seemed an enormous sum to me. Why, I was rich! I ran three times in one minute round the garden. I looked into Rosette's little fold. She had had a lamb in the springtime; it was a big and handsome lamb, for I had taken great care of it. If I sold it, I might put a better building beside the one my dear great-uncle had made for me, which I never would destroy for his sake. Then I should have money to buy two or three chickens; and later maybe I might, if I bought a little kid, have a good goat of my own. I was carrying out the fable of Perette and her milk-pail (Alnaschar and his pots, or the maid and her basket of eggs); but I was not the girl to spill my milk for the pleasure of skipping and jumping, and my dreams were to be realized to a degree that I never thought of when I dreamed them.

VI.

HOWEVER, as I grew glad I grew anxious; and as I was sitting pensive under my hawthorn hedge and hazel bushes, the Little Brother appeared, to ask me if I were displeased at what he had done for me, and why I was siting alone, when others wished to make me happy.

"Are you thinking," he said, "how poor Père Jean clung to his serfage and his poverty?"

"No," I replied. "Maybe if he had lived to see this day he would have understood by this time what everybody seems now to be beginning to understand; but I will tell you just how I was feeling. I am pleased in one way, and sorry in another. I foresee how much will have to be done to keep up this property, and I know my cousins will not help me. They will have no attachment to a place that is not theirs. Maybe they will even grow jealous of me. They often laugh at me now, because I take more care of them than they do of themselves. You know they are rough lads, and do not care to be otherwise; that they would sooner spoil than repair; and that when one day's work is done they are quite satisfied, provided they have not to take thought for another. Well, maybe they are right; maybe they will never be thankful to me for my trouble. And I am so young. Do you think that at my age I can manage property worth a hundred francs? They will tease me. What do you advise me? Maybe you think as my cousins are sure to do."

"I no longer think as they do," he replied. "We all thought once that the more we tried to better things the worse they grew; and for my part I had made up my mind to live hand to mouth without caring for the morrow. But during the past year I have greatly changed, Nanon. I have thought much as I listened to the monks. They have taught me no Greek and no Latin; but I have observed their want of sympathy in the welfare of the poor, though they call themselves their fathers and guardians. When I have seen them making fun of thrift and labor, encouraging laziness, and saying that things can never be improved, I have resolved to change myself; and I have blushed to think I was an idler. I have worked, — yes, little one, I have taught myself a great deal as I rambled in the lanes and trod the heather. I *must* exercise my body, — I *must* stretch my legs. Just see, I am only eighteen! I am lean as a goat, and like a goat I feel impelled to jump and run. But I do think about things. I am often thinking when others are busy; and you no longer see me associating with children rather than endure my own society. You may have noticed, too, that when I want to speak I can now find something to say. I have things in my head that I hardly understand myself; but my heart tells me that they are good things, and helpful to humanity, for I hate those who think evil. The day when I found out that I was a monk no longer, I changed as much as Rosette would if instead of bleating she began to talk to you."

"What," I cried, "don't you mean to be a monk? Have your parents changed their views about you?"

"I don't know. I have heard no more from them than if they thought I was dead. But I know that they are very proud, and will not let me receive from the State that sti-

pend on which monks are henceforth to live. When all has been settled and arranged, they will never permit a gentleman who would have put his share into the community to be reduced to receive his support from alms. Then, too, the Assembly is about to pass, or may have passed (for I don't know all that is now taking place in Paris), a law that will prohibit any further additions to the brethren. The old monks will have their daily bread provided for them until they die; but the State will not permit any more young men to bind themselves for life by convent vows. I shall never be a monk; and I am so glad of it that it seems to me as if I never lived before. You thought I was resigned to my fate, — and at one time you were right; I accepted it. Mine was a despairing soul, whose very pride withheld it from attempting a resistance that would lead to nothing. I shall never feel so again now that I have breathed, as people say, the breath of liberty."

"But, Little Brother, what will you do if your parents give you none of their money?"

"If they leave me destitute, — which I hardly suppose they will do, — I will then become a peasant, which will be no hardship for me. I know how to use an axe and a mattock like any other man. It seems to me very easy to live as I please, now that the world lies all before me. I do not much concern myself about my fate. At all events, I could become a soldier. I have hope and happiness in my heart. If I am still left here, here I shall stay without impatience, since I know that I have friends, and that nobody despises me. So you see you need not worry about me. Think of yourself. Do not get disheartened by the difficulties that you may have in managing your little property. The peasant of to-day, you must perceive, stands between

two things, — the past, when many suffered rather than help themselves; the future, when if a man helps himself he need suffer no longer. You have always been of good courage; and it was you who first imparted courage to me. Hold fast that courage, — it is worth having; and if you must put double energy into your will, do so rather than go back to that state of soul-sickness and mere animalism to which serfage reduces those who accept the yoke."

I hardly know in what words the Little Brother told me all these things. I recall them as best I can; and no doubt he did his best to put them well into my mind, for they became part of myself from that time forward, — part of myself forever. They responded to my natural instinct of ordering my life well, and I have had great good from them all my life long.

We went back to the fête, where a great noise was going on. Two neighboring parishes had arrived, anxious to *fraternize*, as the saying was in those days. They had brought their horns and pipes, and planted their banners beside ours, over the Fountain of Miracles. Never had Valcreux witnessed such rejoicings; and when night came it seemed hard to separate. The harvest was at hand, however, and those from the lowlands, who had hired themselves out to reap, or those who had crops of their own to get in, did not want to fail in attention to agriculture. These communes were richer than ours, and the harvest with us was not so important an affair as with them. When some of us grumbled about this, our new friends said, "Never mind, — buy the monks' land, and where they raise broom you can reap oats and barley."

We parted with many friendly embraces, promising to be good friends, and to lend one another help in case of

need. We escorted our visitors a little way, and as I was coming back with the Little Brother through the dusk of the evening, we came upon something which gave me much to think of.

We had lingered behind the rest, — why, I do not remember, — and in order to catch up with our companions, we took a little goat-track, seldom used, through the ravine. Walking fast, and making no noise on the moss, we came suddenly upon two persons, — a girl, whom I knew, for she belonged to our village; and a big fellow, who could not hide his vocation, for his monk's frock betrayed him even in the darkness. They did not see us, and as they walked in advance of us the girl said, —

"I will not listen to you. You cannot marry me."

Then Brother Cyril, who was one of the two young monks at Valcreux, answered, —

"If you will only be good to me, I swear to marry you. I will leave the Convent to-morrow morning."

"Then do so, and come and see my parents," she replied. "That is the way to make me listen to you."

She tried to pass on; he tried to detain her, when suddenly he saw us, and deeply ashamed of himself, he fled one way and she another.

The Little Brother expressed no surprise, and walked on in silence beside me; as for me, I was greatly excited, and could not forbear to question him.

"Do you think," I said, "that the Brother really will ever marry Jeanne Moulinot?"

"Yes, indeed," he said. "What should hinder him? He has been thinking of it for some time. He must have a family of some sort, — man cannot live alone."

"Then you will marry, too," I said, "some day?"

"Of course, I shall. I should like to have children, and to make them happy. But I am too young yet to think of such things."

"Too young! How long will it be then before you think of them?"

"Five or six years, perhaps, — when I have found some way to make a living."

"Then I dare say you will choose some rich young lady?"

"I don't know. That will depend on what my family may be willing to do for me. But I will never take a wife I do not love."

"Does anybody?"

"Sometimes persons marry to better themselves."

"And you will be happy some day, — and then I shall see you no longer. Perhaps I shall not even know where you may be, and you will never think about me then."

"I should always think about you, Nanon, were I ever so far away."

"I want to learn something that — I suppose you know."

"What is it?"

"I want to know places on a map like the one that I once saw at the Monastery."

"All right; then I will learn geography, and I will teach it to you."

We parted at the gates of the Monastery. There were peasants still bringing in the tables and benches. I heard one of the old men say, —

"It has been too happy a day ever to come back again. Things that are happy cannot last long."

They said the truth. It was the happiest day of the French Revolution. Soon all was to be miserably spoiled.

Those who had had experience possibly foresaw the change. I did not; and these words of our old men frightened me. It seemed to me unjust and ungrateful toward a merciful God to say such things. "Surely," I thought, "God will prolong a thing that is so good."

I went back to my cottage with a sad thought in my heart, — the thought that some day the Little Brother might go away, and that I should never see him more. A tear trickled down my cheek. The old men's prophecy was fulfilled. I had passed through the happiest day of my childhood, and it ended in fears for the future, and a wish to cry.

However, the rest of the year passed, and nothing disastrous happened in our part of the country. But our joy did not continue, and things that were rumored made us anxious at times. Nobody came forward to buy the Convent lands, and the mayor, who had received a very small part of the subscription promised for my house, had to pay the hire of it to the Monastery.

Among the things we heard were rumors of disputes at Paris between the King and the National Assembly. We heard that the nobles and the priests laughed at the decrees of the year '89, and threatened to put down the communes, which were believed to be in league against them. Trade was at a stand-still, we were all poorer than ever; and we began again to be in fear of the brigands, though we did not know whence they might come. We knew, indeed, that there had been plundering in various directions, woods burned, and châteaux pillaged; but it was done by peasants, like ourselves, and we tried to suppose that it was because the gentry had first attacked them. Quarrelling and disputing now began. No one as yet talked of a republic, — we had never heard of such a

word; but we disagreed about religion. The monks, who had kept very quiet at first, now showed considerable annoyance when, one morning, the two youngest brothers, Cyril and Pascal, went off secretly, flinging, as the proverb says, — *le froc aux orties*, — their monks' frocks on the hedges. It was a good joke in the parish. Three of the four remaining monks were very angry, and began to preach against the revolutionary spirit that was abroad. Though the old Prior was dead, they had given him no successor, because they could not agree on one; and they lived under a republic, with no one to command and no one to obey.

The Little Brother, whom the villagers were beginning to call M. Emilien, — for he never disguised his intention of not remaining in the Convent, — did not talk openly, for propriety's sake, about the quarrels in the Monastery; but as he knew I was prudent, he told me about them when we were alone. I knew through him that the Père Fructueux — the great rough monk that we children had never loved — was the best, indeed the only, true-hearted man out of the four. He, of course, was not glad to see the Monastery put up for sale, for he thought the sale certain, and possibly speedy; but he was resolved to do nothing wrong to hinder it, while the others, especially Père Pamphilion, egged on by letters and by secret news, talked of putting down the peasantry, and of rousing the more religious by exciting their consciences against those who had shown no religious scruples against acquiring church lands. In short, they wanted civil war, being persuaded that God willed it; and had he and the other monks been more bold, or more skilful, they might have excited us against one another.

One evening, after having given my two cousins their

supper, I was going to my bed at Mariotte's cottage, when Emilien came up to me.

"Listen!" he said. "I have a secret to tell you, — a secret between us two. There is too much excitement already in the commune; you must not let any one know what I am going to say. This evening I did not see Père Fructueux at supper. The others had been quarrelling with him all day. They said he was sick. I slipped into his cell, but he was not there; and when I searched for him, they told me he was in punishment, that it was no business of mine, and that I must go to my own chamber. I spoke out my mind freely, saying, that to punish a brother for a difference in political opinions seemed to me an abuse of power. I wanted to know *how* they had punished him. They told me to be silent, and threatened to shut me up too. By this I found out that the poor monk is somewhere in prison. I saw that I should only injure him by asking any more questions, that things were changed, and that they were going to use rigor. I entered my cell without another word, as if I were obedient; but soon after I climbed out of the window like a cat, and by walking over the roof I gained a spot whence I could get down, and here I am. I want to know where poor Père Fructueux is. If in the dungeon, as I fear, it is a frightful place, where they may make him suffer much, were it only by fasting, which would be very severe on him, for he is accustomed to live well, and to want for nothing. Now, I know how to get, not into the dungeon, but into a little passage through which the dungeon gets its outside air. I have several times tried whether a thin person could not slip down this place to speak to prisoners, and to carry them food. I never could get down myself, and yet I *almost* could. My shoulders are broad; but

you, who are as thin as a distaff, — you could do it easily. Come along! When I know that the old man is there I can take measures to assist him. If he is not there I shall sleep in peace, knowing that his imprisonment cannot be very severe."

I did not stop to think. I pulled off my wooden shoes, so as to make no noise upon the rocks, and by a goat-path, which led straight down to the back of the Monastery, I followed Emilien. He made me descend still lower into a cleft, lifting me down in his arms. From thence we crawled into a kind of cave. I knew all the spots where rock and mason-work were joined together, — there are no mysterious places that children do not investigate; but I did not know what could be behind a little window of thick glass, closed by a padlock, at the end of the cave. Long ago Emilien, who loved prowling in strange places more than any one I ever knew, had found out this spot; and he had already remarked that since morning the window had been opened, which made him feel sure that some one was in the dungeon who needed air.

"It is here that you must creep in," he said to me. "See if you can do so without hurting yourself, Nanon."

VII.

I could not even see down the dark hole I was to creep into; for besides that it was dusk, the cave was dim even in daylight, and one had to enter it by groping with one's hands. I did not hesitate, however, and I got in easily. I crawled up to the grating of a little opening, and I listened. At first I heard nothing; then I distinguished what sounded like words. Presently the voice rose louder, and I recognized it as that of the Père Fructueux. He was saying his prayers with many sighs. I called him, cautiously, by name. He was frightened, and stopped abruptly.

"Fear nothing!" I said. "It is I, — little Nanette. I was brought here by the Little Brother Emilien, who is behind me, and wants to know if you are suffering."

"Ah, my good children!" he replied. "Thank you! God bless you! Yes, indeed, I am suffering! I am sick; I am suffocated. But you cannot help me."

"Perhaps you are hungry and thirsty?"

"No; I have some bread and some water, and can manage to sleep on straw. This night will soon be ended, and perhaps to-morrow my punishment will be over. Go away. If Emilien were found trying to help me he would be punished as I am."

I crawled backward to Emilien, who begged me to return and say as follows: —

"One night is nothing. But if you have to stay here longer we shall find it out, and we will manage to deliver you."

"No, no; don't do it!" he cried. "I must submit, or it will be the worse for me."

It was not easy to talk, for I was stifled in the trench, and I was keeping from the prisoner all his supply of air. When I got back to Emilien, I said, —

"One thing I am sure of, and that is, if you go back to the Monastery they will treat you as they have this poor brother."

"Don't be uneasy about me," he said. "I shall be prudent. If the Père Fructueux does not reappear to-morrow I know where he is, and I will make up my mind what to do about it. As I am resolved to help him, I am not so foolish as to get myself into trouble."

We parted.

The next day the prisoner was still in the dungeon, and the day after, too. Every evening we both came and talked to him, and I managed to slip in to him a piece of meat which Emilien had carried off for him, and which he said was nice to smell; but he told me afterwards that he had been too sick to eat it. His voice had grown very weak, and on the evening of the third day he seemed hardly able to answer us. All we could make out was that he would have to stay there until he promised to do something that he would not promise to do. He said that he had rather die than promise.

"Now," said Emilien, "it is no longer possible to let this thing go on. It would be cowardly! Come with me, Nanon, to the mayor; you shall testify to the truth. The magistrates must summon the monks to release their prisoner."

This proved not as easy as he expected. The mayor was an excellent man, but not a very brave one. He had made money by hiring the monks' best dairy-farm, and he was not sure but that they might be again his masters. He said, indeed, that the Père Fructueux was the only member of the community who was a good man, and that they ought to have made him their Superior. But he would not believe that the brothers had any idea of letting him die in prison.

Fortunately, some other municipal gentlemen arrived, and Emilien spoke to them eagerly. He reminded them that the law had broken all religious vows, and decreed the liberty of the monks. The duty of the municipality was to carry out the law, and not to go against it. If the municipality of Valcreux declined to do its duty, he said, he would set out at once for the next town, where he was sure to find magistrates more brave and more humane.

I was well pleased to see Emilien's energy, and with prayers and caresses I too pleaded with the mayor, who was fond of me, and who questioned me about Père Fructueux's place of confinement, knowing that I would be sure to tell the truth.

"Come along, then," he said. "I suppose that we old folks must march under the orders of you two children. It is a queer state of things, but we live in the midst of changes. We willed it ourselves, and we must bear the consequences."

"You know," said Emilien, "that we have come to you with all due respect, and with all proper prudence and precaution. We have not mentioned what has happened to any one in the village; if we had chosen to stir up the young people of the neighborhood the prisoner would by this time have been set at liberty. But then they might

have ill-treated the monks, which we are sure you would not wish them to do. Come, then, and speak boldly in the name of the law."

The mayor begged that three or four of the council would accompany him.

"I own," he said, "that I had rather not go unattended. Monks are meek and gentle enough when they are let alone; but if you disturb them they can bite, — and their teeth are sharp, too."

They went quietly to the Monastery, and were well received. The monks suspected nothing; but when the mayor said that he must speak to *all* of them in the name of the law, and that he did not see the Père Fructueux, they were much embarrassed, and made believe that he was sick.

"Sick or well, we must see him!" said the mayor. "Take us to his chamber."

They were kept waiting a long time. The monks hoped to lull the municipal officers to sleep, and they politely set their best wine before them. The wine was accepted and swallowed, — they were too polite to refuse, — but the mayor persisted in his purpose all the same, until at last he was conducted to the cell of Père Fructueux. The brothers had had time to bring him back to it, and to tell him that he was pardoned; and when the mayor questioned him about his health, the poor man, unwilling to betray his brethren, replied that he had had an attack of gout, and was obliged to keep his room. For one moment the mayor fancied that we had not told the truth; but he was smart enough to guess how things were, and he said to the monks, —

"My good Fathers, I see that the Père Fructueux is quite ill; we know the cause of his sickness, and we are here to put an end to it. If the Père Fructueux wishes

to leave your Monastery he is free to do so, and my house is open to him; if not, we give you notice that it will be dangerous for you to assign him uncomfortable quarters, because the law is ready to protect him, and the National Guard is at hand to enforce the law."

The monks made believe that they did not understand, and the Père Fructueux politely declined the protection offered him; but all the same, they took heed of the warning. They had had no idea that the mayor would have shown so much spirit, and they were cowed. The next day they held a council, and Père Fructueux, who might have been their ruin, but would not betray them, was named Superior. He was petted and cared for, and he took no revenge. From that time forward the monks were very quiet; but they guessed that Emilien had taken part against them, and they hated him mortally, without, however, daring to show their feelings openly in any way.

This adventure made us great friends, — Emilien and me. We had acted in concert for something, — the importance of which I daresay we over-estimated, because it flattered our small vanity; but we had engaged in it very heartily, and had run some danger. We could no longer be considered children. From that day forth Emilien became so manly that no one would have known him for the same person. He continued to hunt, but he always gave away his game to the sick poor; he no longer used it to make feasts on the grass in company with boys of his own age. He read much, not only books and papers which he got from the town, but books in the Convent library; for he said that in the general collection there were some good ones. He taught me diligently, and in the winter, when the evenings were long, I made much progress, and began to understand everything he said to me.

Having no more rent to pay to the monks, and being able to make a little money (for I had begun to go out by the day, and was employed to mend the linen of the Convent), I was no longer in penury. My pupils brought me in something. It became the fashion among us to learn to read, until after the sale of the national property; then, for some reason, our people thought no more about it. But I had a second lamb, and I sold the first one so well that I managed to buy a second sheep. Some one gave me two hens, which, as I took great care of them, became good layers. I was quite astonished at the end of the year to find that I had laid up fifty francs.

My big cousins were amazed at my success, for they made four times as much as I did, and laid by nothing; but finding that I was willing to lodge them free of expense, they were good enough to repair the roof of my house, and to enlarge the accommodations of my sheepfold.

In the spring of 1791 we heard great news. A law had been passed granting us eight months' time in which to pay for national property. At once the rush of buyers was like a flock of larks alighting on a field, and in three days everybody became a purchaser. The lots were all small, and sold so cheaply that the poorest lands in the valley were taken up immediately. Every one took as much land as his means would allow; and Père Pamphilion, the grumbler, endeavored in vain to convince every one who bought land that he would not long retain his purchase, because a curse was sure to fall on sacrilege. There were not many who believed him. Besides, Père Fructueux ordered him to be silent. He was ready to obey the law, though it was very hard upon him. As for me, I bought my house for thirty-three francs; and I was able besides

to return the subscriptions made for me at the Feast of the Federation, begging the mayor to give the money to the poor. I felt myself rich, since now I owned real estate, and had fifteen francs left after I had given back the subscription money.

The only thing that none of us even dreamed of buying was the Monastery, with its great buildings, and the lands assigned it, which being of the best kind were too dear for our slender purses. We therefore thought that the monks would hold possession a long time, — maybe forever. But during the month of May a gentleman presented himself, accompanied by the mayor and one of the magistrates of the neighboring town, and showing papers which proved that he had purchased the Monastery, he summoned the Community in the name of the law to give it up to him.

Of course, the three monks who had elected Père Fructueux as their Superior must have known that he would not oppose whatever might take place. They had made arrangements to find another residence without waiting for the summons, and when the new purchaser entered the Monastery the only monk he found there was the Superior, counting out money, and making entries in a ledger.

Emilien, who was present at their interview (for Père Fructueux had asked him to remain, and to help him with his accounts), told me what passed between them.

But first I must say who the purchaser was. He was a patriotic lawyer from Limoges, whose intention was to sell his purchase, and who expected, if the law was sustained, to make out of it considerable money; but he knew that in such times great risks must be run in every transaction, and he had made up his mind to take them for the

sake of the Revolution. All this he said to the Superior, who received him politely, and encouraged him to talk with him.

"I believe what you tell me," said Père Fructueux. "Your face is that of an honest man, and I know that you have an excellent reputation. For my part, I have all along expected that our property would be sold as soon as the Assembly extended the time of payment. The thing has been done, and I can only submit. I am making up my accounts, to see what actual money the brotherhood possessed, and I should like to be informed by M. le Maire here present to whom I am to pay it over, since the law only gives us an annuity from the State?"

M. Costejoux (that was the name of the new purchaser) was astonished at the probity of the Superior. He had many prejudices against monks, and could not refrain from asking him if the other members of the Community had been equally disinterested when abandoning their property.

"Monsieur," replied Père Fructueux, "you have nothing to do with my brothers in religion. They quitted this house without carrying away any part of the common property. They could not have done so, because I am both Treasurer and Superior. If there is any suspicion of ill-faith, it must fall upon me."

The mayor protested that no one entertained any such suspicions; the lawyer asked pardon for what he had said, and the town magistrate declared that he trusted implicitly to the correctness of the accounts of the Prior. He received the money, which amounted to eleven thousand francs, and which he was to pay over to the State. He gave a receipt for it, and requested the Prior to put in his claim for the annuity due to him.

"I shall put in no claim, and I desire no annuity," replied Père Fructueux. "The family to which I belong is well off. It will be glad to take me home, and even to give me back my share of my father's property now that I am no longer legally in holy orders."

The purchaser seeing how unselfish Père Fructueux was, and how submissive to the law, begged him not to consider himself harshly turned out of his old quarters, where he pressed him to remain for several days, — and longer if he wished it. The Prior thanked him, but said that he had for some time been ready to leave.

Then they took notice of the Little Brother, who was there without a penny in the world, and nothing except the clothes he had on.

"And you, Monsieur," said the town magistrate, — "has any one decided what you shall do?"

"I do not know," said the Little Brother.

"Who are you?"

"Emilien de Franqueville."

"In that case, we need not trouble ourselves about you. Your family is among the richest in the province, and you will go back to your friends."

"But," said Emilien, rather embarrassed, "I have received no orders from my family, and I do not know where it may be."

The purchaser, the mayor, and the magistrate looked at each other with surprise.

"Is it possible," cried the former, "that they can have abandoned in this manner — "

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur!" interrupted Emilien. "You are speaking in my presence, and I authorize no man to throw blame on my relatives."

"That is right," resumed M. Costejoux; "nevertheless

you must consider your position. Your father, mot and brother have quitted France, and if their abs is prolonged they will be accounted *émigrés*. Now, cannot but know that there is a law in contemplatio confiscate the property of *émigrés*, and you may yourself penniless: for if war is declared, the co cation of your estate, and that of all nobles who l gone over to the enemy, will be the first act of Assembly."

"My father and brother never would be guilty of j ing the enemies of France!" exclaimed Emilien. am so sure of it that I have made up my mind to en if for some reason unknown to me my parents ca get back to France and determine what shall bec of me."

"These are excellent sentiments," answered the law "but *en attendant* the war, and your being of an ag enlist, allow me to interest myself in you. I should like to take possession of this prison in which you l been placed, and then turn you out of doors. Stay l until I have had time to ascertain what your family do for you. There is a steward left behind at Fran ville who probably has had instructions, and I will jog memory."

"Perhaps he has had no orders concerning me," re Emilien. "My parents probably never anticipated sale of the church property, and doubtless they imagi am in need of nothing from them."

"Did they not pay your board in the Monastery?"

"No," said the Superior; "the Convent was to ceive twenty thousand francs the day that he rece the tonsure."

"I understand now," said M. Costejoux to the ma

trate. "They wanted to get rid of the younger son, and were anxious to make it the interest of the monks to keep him up to his vocation."

The Superior smiled, and said to Emilien, —

"I never concealed from you, my son, that I thought the days for convents were now over, and I have never pressed you to take up your vocation."

They clasped each other's hands; for since the adventure of the dungeon, they greatly loved and esteemed each other. Emilien proudly begged the lawyer to give himself no trouble about him. He had no inclination for a roving life, he said; and in this very commune he could find work which would keep him from being indebted to anybody.

The magistrate went home, and the purchaser and the mayor walked through the buildings of the Monastery in earnest conversation; when they came back, M. Costejoux had come to a resolution that was very unexpected.

VIII.

"M. LE PRIEUR," said M. Costejoux, "I have j learned from the mayor certain particulars touching yo self and young Franqueville, which make me anxious to the friend of both of you, if you will accept me as such. may do each other mutual service, — I by confiding to y my interests; you by accepting the management of my n property. I neither expect to live here nor to farm t land myself, — I have other occupations; nor am I lik to sell it for several years, for I am willing to wait fo good purchaser. Now, I would like you both to stay he and to manage things as if they belonged to you. I certain that I can put perfect confidence in any accou you furnish me. I exact only one thing, — you must gi no asylum to any member of the clergy. In all oth respects you can feel yourselves at home, and you can ta whatever part you think proper for your own needs out the product of the lands you farm for me."

Père Fructueux was much astonished at this offer, a asked leave to think it over until the next morning. T mayor asked the new proprietor to supper. His hos tality was willingly accepted, and they carried off Emilie whom they were surprised and delighted to find a go patriot and a loyal citizen.

When Emilien returned to the Prior (for Père Fru tueux continued to be called so, though he had on reigned in the Convent six weeks), the good old m asked his advice.

"My son," he said, "we are like sailors stranded on an unknown shore. I have not long to live, for though I am not very old, and look stout, I have never got over my imprisonment. Ever since then I have had a shortness of breath which is very troublesome, and I do not think I shall ever get over it. I told M. Costejoux the truth when I said that I had a family to return to and a small inheritance; but I may own to you that my family and I are almost strangers to each other, and even if I ventured to confide in their kind remembrance, I am not sure that I could fit into their ideas and ways. I entered the Monastery of Valcreux at sixteen, as you have done, and that is just fifty years ago. I have been nearly always unhappy ever since, partly from one cause and partly from another. Yet had my lot fallen elsewhere, who knows but that I might have suffered just as much? Be that as it may, I should now suffer more from change than any other thing. A man cannot quit a house where he has once been master without leaving behind him a bit of his own soul. It seems to me that it would be almost impossible for me to live where I could see no longer these old walls, these high towers, these gardens, rocks, and so forth, that I have always looked upon. Therefore I accept the offer made me by M. Costejoux, and I hope to finish my life where it has been spent. But with you it is different. You can have no attachment to the Monastery, and it seems impossible that your family will not provide for you when it knows of the suppression of the convents. But who knows what may happen to your father or his fortunes? Your father, between whom and myself several letters have been exchanged, is a man of the past, who never could have anticipated what has happened, and who will only believe in it, I fear, when it is too late to provide for his

own safety. I have known, but I never told you, that the peasants of Franqueville have done much damage to your château. Had it not been for the steward, who is a very smart and crafty man, they would have burned it to the ground; but they hope your lands will be confiscated, as the lawyer told you, and in that case there could be no safety at Franqueville for your family or yourself. Stay with me, therefore, and wait for events to develop themselves. If you went anywhere else, or if you took any occupation not agreeable to your father, he might be dissatisfied, and blame me; while, on the other hand, if by and by he finds you where he left you, he cannot blame you for undertaking duties which will keep you from want till he returns."

"But what duties?" said Emilien. "What can I do to earn the daily bread you offer me?"

"You can keep my accounts, and you can look after the laborers. In any press of work you can work yourself, for you love bodily exertion. I own I have no fancy for hard labor."

So saying the Prior went to bed, and Emilien early in the morning came to consult me, as if I were a person capable of giving him advice on such a subject. It seemed to me the Prior's reasoning was excellent, and I begged Emilien to remain at the Monastery.

"If you go," I said, "I cannot imagine what will become of me. I have grown to depend on you so much that I really think I should follow you if I had to beg my bread along the roads."

"If that is so," he said, "I will stay as long as I can, for I have the same regard for you that you seem to have for me, and I should be just as sorry to leave you as I was to leave my little sister."

"Can you get no news from her? Is she alone at Franqueville?"

"No; she was to have gone into a nunnery soon after I came here."

"Where was it?"

"At Limoges. But what you say reminds me that she may have been turned out into the world, as we have been; and now that I am free I will go and look after her."

"To Limoges? *Mon Dieu!* that is very far away, and you don't know even how to get there!"

"Oh, I can find my way, — never fear. It is not fifty miles from here."

This journey was decided upon, and the Prior made no objection. The new purchaser himself, who was very glad to leave the care of his property in good hands, offered to take Emilien with him, and to help him in his inquiries; for he had not heard that the little lady of Franqueville had been sent to any convent in Limoges, and he feared that her brother might have some trouble in finding her. He begged him, however, to put on citizen's clothes, for though at that period the clergy were not openly denounced and persecuted, a known revolutionist did not like to be seen in their company. Emilien gladly hastened to find the clothes that he had worn before he entered the Convent, forgetting that in three years he had grown a head taller, and broad in proportion. My cousin Pierre, who was about his age and size, had a brand new suit of coarse cloth, which I asked him to lend to Emilien. He did not care to do so, but said that he would sell it to him. Emilien had no money, and not knowing when he should have any, did not care to borrow. Ah, how pleased and how proud I was to have fifteen francs to offer him! After many hesitations he accepted them. With half of this amount he bought

Pierre's complete suit, which I thought became him wonderfully, and put the rest into his pocket, that he might be no expense to any one upon his journey.

When M. Costejoux first saw him in this trim he burst out laughing, but not unkindly.

"Ah! M. le Vicomte," he cried, — "for notwithstanding your brief trial of monkery, you are still the Vicomte de Franqueville, your elder brother being a Count and your father a Marquis, — and so you are dressed like a peasant! But I suppose you mean to get other clothes when we reach the town?"

"No, Monsieur," replied Emilien, "I cannot. If you are ashamed to have a peasant in your company, you can go without me, and I will come on alone."

The lawyer burst into a roar of laughter. "Capital!" he said. "You have given me a lesson in equality; but I doubt if I needed it. We are sure to suit each other, and shall get on well together."

On their arrival at Limoges, Emilien, with the help of M. Costejoux, searched for his sister in every direction. There were several nunneries left, — some through tolerance, some because nobody had offered to buy them. But his sister was not in any of them, and he proceeded to Franqueville to get news of her.

At first no one recognized him, — he was so grown, so altered, and his dress was so different from what he had worn before. He got at last into the château and saw the steward, who was astonished when he told him his name, and made believe that he did not identify him. He even said, —

"You say you are the Vicomte de Franqueville, and possibly you may be; but on the other hand you may not, for you have brought me no letters or papers which prove

the truth of your assertion. At any rate, I have had no orders about you. Your friends have emigrated, and seem likely not to return, unless with the allied armies. It is unfortunate for both them and you, for your property will be sold, and nothing will be left for you. Meantime, I have no authority to make use of any money in my hands without a written order from your parents or a legal requisition; and as you have no papers I can give you nothing."

"I did not come to you for money," answered the poor Vicomte, proudly; "I do not need any."

"Ah! you have something then, — your share of the treasures at Valcreux? I for one never imagined that the monks could have been so foolish as not to divide what they had in their vaults before leaving the Monastery."

"There was no treasure in the Monastery of Valcreux, and what little ready money they had left was paid over to the State by the Prior. But all that is nothing to you, since you do not choose to recognize me. I merely come to ask you where my sister is, and I hope you have no reason for not answering me."

"None at all. Your sister — supposing you to be a Franqueville — is at Tulle, with my own family. It was dangerous to keep her here; the peasantry were bitter against all of you. It was only by a miracle I could restrain them, and I don't sleep upon a bed of roses in your château nowadays, I can tell you. I sent the little girl away. She is well taken care of by a cousin of mine, and I pay for her support."

Emilien asked the name of the relative to whom the steward had confided the child, and having got it, he set out at once, without trying to be recognized by any of the servants; but when he had nearly got out of the village he was stopped by an old butler, who had been always

fond of him, and who knew him at the first glance. He cried out, —

"Monsieur Emilien!"

Emilien's heart swelled within him. He flung himself upon his old friend's neck with sobs, and all the village came running to welcome him. They loved him. They knew him to have been sacrificed to his elder brother and to the false notions of his family; they remembered how he had lived among them, neglected by those who should have protected him, and no better off than the poorest among themselves. They grew excited. The steward had been popular while he tried to appease them by urging them to wait for the sale, soon to take place, of the property of the *émigrés;* but now it was the common cry that he was a deceiver, intent only on protecting his master's property from injury because he hoped to buy it for himself. He was rich; he had robbed his employers to some purpose. Some wanted to hang him, to carry Emilien home in triumph, to establish him in the château of his ancestors, and to take him for their lord. They were bent on setting him over them. He found it hard to calm them, and to convince them that he did not wish to go against the will of his father. Besides, he was in haste to find his sister, who was possibly very badly off, for the more he heard of the steward's rascality the more anxious he was to lose no time. They had at last to let him go; but the old butler, Dumont, was resolved to accompany him.

They took the stage and went to Tulle. There they found poor little Louise with an old fury who starved her, and beat her when she complained. She told her brother all her griefs, and the neighbors assured him that she had stated them correctly. If the old woman received board

for Louise she did not spend it upon her, but made her eat chestnut-skins and wear tatters.

Emilien was so hurt and so angry that without seeing the old woman or taking counsel with any one, he took his sister with him and set off straight for the Monastery, together with old Dumont, who had a little money, and would not separate from the poor children.

I may as well here add the sequel of this adventure. The Marquis de Franqueville had no near relatives in that part of the country, for as the custom of the family had long been to suppress its younger members in favor of the elder, there were no relatives or connections who could be asked to look after Louise and Emilien. On being attacked in their own castle, the parents and the elder brother had left it in great haste, giving the steward and a nurse orders that the little girl should be placed as soon as possible in a convent. The steward had found it more economical to put her where he had done, and wrote to the Marquis, representing things as he wished him to see them. Of course Emilien had no legal right to carry off his sister, and should have consulted M. Costejoux, an excellent lawyer, who would have advised him to place her under the protection of some lady connected with the family. But the thing being done, the lawyer would not disapprove of it; for these two minors, he said, were in a peculiar position, being virtually orphans, without guardians, and by the force of circumstances left to themselves. He blamed the steward greatly, but had no power to make him disgorge. There seemed to be no legal rules to fit the case. He advised Emilien to wait, and not to go back to Franqueville, where his presence might bring on great disorders. The old relative of the steward had, he said, no right to reclaim little Mademoiselle de Franqueville, though Emilien had

no right to keep her with him. The most pressing thing now was to force the steward to send money for their maintenance. M. Costejoux wrote to Coblentz, where the de Franquevilles were in exile; but he got no answer, probably because his letter never reached them. Then, fearing to make a fuss in times when the smallest thing might lead to unexpected consequences, he sent Emilien five hundred francs out of his own pocket, telling him, however, in order to spare his pride, that they came from the steward of Franqueville, who had thought better of his duty.

This view of the case was contradicted by the steward, who got frightened and sent a thousand francs to Emilien, telling his messenger to say that since he had been recognized in the village he begged him to pardon him his want of confidence, and to receive a sum of money which would enable him to provide properly for his sister, — offering, besides, to send her her nurse, who was willing to go to her; but Louise had told us that this woman was devoted to amusement, and took little trouble about her. So Emilien sent a receipt for the money, and declined the woman. He then went back to Limoges to thank M. Costejoux and to return his money. The lawyer admired the sense, the courage, and the unselfishness of the young man. He earnestly begged him to keep his sister at the Monastery, to make it his own home, to do nothing but amuse himself, and to feel sure that he would fully repay him by looking after things which without his services would probably go to ruin.

IX.

So there we were, a little band of friends installed in the Monastery, — the good Prior, Emilien, little Louise, old Dumont, and I, — for Emilien begged me to be governess and companion to his sister, while at the same time I was to look after the household, assisted by Mariotte. My two cousins were employed as laborers to work the land. This made many mouths to feed off the soil so long neglected and at best but poor; but except the two farm men and Mariotte, who were paid by the day, we were all bent on giving our time and toil for nothing, and we managed the housekeeping so economically that the owner was delighted, and became very anxious to keep us there. He who did least was the Prior, who grew more and more asthmatic; but yet without him nothing could have been done, for so many young persons needed an older one over them, and he was the only person among us accustomed to command. As we had each a little money put away, we asked nothing in advance from M. Costejoux. The Prior had a small sum offered him by his family, on condition that he would not disturb their inheritance. He sent Dumont to his native village, and seemed satisfied with what he brought back to him.

Things being thus settled, we felt, with a pleasant selfishness, that in the midst of all the griefs and woes that menaced France we enjoyed exceptional felicity. It should be said in our justification that we really knew very little

of what was going on, and that we had found politics by this time past our understanding. So long as the Community of Monks had lasted we had received newspapers, district orders, and news from clerical superiors. Nothing was now sent to the Prior; the clergy had deserted him; they blamed him for having gone over to the enemy by accepting the hospitality and confidence of the purchaser of the Monastery. The peasants, drunk with joy at having purchased land, were fully occupied in surrounding their precious little lots with thorns and stones for fences. They worked with a zeal that they had never shown before, and as they had perpetual quarrels about metes and bounds, they gave up wrangling about religion and politics. They even grew more religious than they had been in the monks' time. As the Monastery chapel was not a parish church, Mass was not said there; but at the request of the villagers the Prior had the *angelus* rung every morning, noon, and evening. Services at these hours had been discontinued for some time, but there is nothing a peasant loves better than his church bell. It announces the close and the beginning of the labors of the day, and tells him the hour for his mid-day meal, which is also his hour for repose. Later on, when the Monastery bells were requisitioned to be cast into cannon, there was a great commotion among the villagers. "A parish that has no bells might as well be dead," they said. And I thought so, like the others.

But before we get to those terrible times when so many wonderful things happened to me, I should like to dwell upon the picture of our quiet, happy, isolated life at dear Valcreux in our old Monastery.

Emilien had so few wants that he fancied himself a rich man for life, now that he had a thousand francs ($200). He had put them into the hands of M. Costejoux, who

promised to invest them to great advantage, — a promise that Emilien concerned himself little about, for he never had any turn for business. He was, however, very glad that the man who had shown him confidence and kindness should have the benefit of his little property. His sole care was to make his sister happy until his family again took charge of her. He did not like to refuse her anything. He was so proud and so pleased that he had been able to save her. It was better than the deliverance of Père Fructueux. He had no real anxieties, for he felt that in M. Costejoux he had a true friend, who would never give him up, and for whom he worked mentally like a clerk and bodily like a day-laborer. He assumed a little authority over the Prior, who was as quick-tempered as he was kind-hearted, and who, being no longer able to rant and scold because of his asthma, got very peevish for the least thing. Emilien used to reason with him, and would call me to his aid, for the poor Prior was generally willing to listen to me, and would grow calm as soon as I promised to make things and persons do all he wanted of them. Little Louise recovered her health, after having been very delicate. Mariotte worked with all her might; my cousins did the same, and they were strong, because we gave them good food, although we never wasted it.

Old Dumont, who was still active, did all our errands, and was not bad at gardening. But unhappily, good and disinterested as he was, he had one fault, — he *would* drink on Sundays, and always came home drunk on Sunday evenings. He however only spent his own money for his drink, and was never quarrelsome. The Prior used to lecture him, and every Monday he would take an' oath that he would never do so again.

As for me, I was the happiest of them all. I was useful

to those I loved best in the world, and in my satisfaction at my own activity and strength of body and will I became happier than I had ever been before. At sixteen I was as tall as I am now, but not at all pretty, for the small-pox had left marks that could still be seen. But people said I had a good face, and looked as if I could be trusted; and M. Costejoux, who came to see us sometimes, said I should always get on in the world, for I should be sure to make friends. I was glad to hear him say that before Emilien, who at once taking my hand and pressing it in his said, —

"She will have one friend at least, who will always look after her and treat her like his sister and his equal."

He said the truth. We loved each other as if the same mother had brought us into the world. Dumont often talked to me about my mother, who had been employed at Franqueville, where he had known her. He said that I was like her, good at everything and liked by everybody. It gave me pleasure to be told this, and in every respect I was so happy that I never dreamed of change.

I had one grief, however, and it was not a slight one, — the perverse temper of little Louise. When the poor child arrived, dirty and delicate, I was grieved to see her in such a state, and at the same time I was very pleased to think that I should care for her and comfort her. Emilien put her into my arms, saying, "She will be your little sister."

"No," I said, "my little daughter rather."

And I said it so heartily, with big tears of loving kindness in my eyes, that any other child, I have often thought, would have flung her arms around my neck and kissed me. But it was not so. Louise looked at me superciliously and disdainfully, and then turning to her brother said, —

"A fine sister indeed for me! She is only a peasant girl! She says that I shall be her little daughter! she

must be crazy. You told me she was nearly my own age. So she is the famous Nanette you have been talking about all the way! She is ugly, and I won't have her kiss me."

That was all that she would say when we first met. Emilien scolded her, and then she began to cry, and ran into a corner. She was very proud. They had brought her up so, telling her that she must be a nun; and in order to teach her Christian humility, they had always impressed upon her that as she would not share her elder brother's fortune, and yet had sprung from too noble a house to make an inferior marriage, she could only retain her greatness by accepting convent poverty. This she believed, for children always believe what is constantly told them.

Her mother had never petted her, for knowing how soon she would part from her she had endeavored not to love her. This beautiful lady flung herself into the gay world of Paris and of fashion, forgetting all natural feelings, making court-life her duty, her family, and her occupation. She did not even love her eldest son, who belonged entirely to his position, and she had hardly more part in him than in her other children. At the time I am writing about, Madame de Franqueville was very sick in foreign lands. She died before long. We did not know it till she had been dead some time, and it was not until long after that I knew what I have here told you.

Little Louise had been brought up at Franqueville by her nurse, and the same tutor who had instructed — or rather who did not instruct — Emilien, was desired to teach her to read and write *a little*. The nurse promised to teach her her prayers, sewing, knitting, and confectionery. Such an education seemed sufficient for a nun, but the nurse found it more than she was disposed to give her. She was a handsome woman, who had lovers, and stayed little at

home. Poor Louise fell to the care of the kitchen maids at Franqueville, who did what they pleased, for when a want of discipline is tolerated in a great household everything feels its effects. As long as the child had her brother Emilien she stayed with him and ran wild with him, — sometimes playing the great lady, finding fault with her nurse, reproaching her with her own wrongs, quarrelling, pouting, teasing the servants, and yet taking too many liberties with them for a little personage who wished to remain their mistress and superior. When she lost her brother, who used to reprove her and to keep her in order as best he might, she became worse, and knowing by instinct that no one loved her she detested everybody. As she was very clever, she said sharp things too cutting for her age. People laughed at them. They would have done better had they reproved her, for she began to be proud of being rude and sharp of tongue.

While Louise lived with the old woman of Tulle she was paid back for all her faults, but in such a way that they only grew worse; and when she came to us she was like a little wasp in a hive of bees. From the very first day I had to coax her to wash herself and to put on clean clothes. But when I gave her the new dress I had managed to procure for her in the village, in the same way as I had done Emilien's suit, she went into a violent rage, and said that, being a young lady and the daughter of a marquis, she never would wear a peasant's costume; she had rather, she said, wear her old rags, which at least were not such as peasants wore, and her brother had to burn them before she would give in. She went on pouting, though she looked very pretty in her striped petticoat and peasant cap. Dinner brought her consolation, for she had been long deprived of proper food; and in the evening she condescended to

play with me, but only on condition that I should be her servant, and that she might beat me. At night she slept with me in a pretty little cell, where I had put a soft white bed for her beside my own. There were still some beautifully fine sheets in the Monastery, and she seemed to appreciate them; but when she had to dress herself in the morning it was the same thing over again, and I had to pin a bunch of flowers in her cap, and to make believe that it was a fancy costume and that she was a shepherdess.

By degrees, however, as Louise came to understand that my services to her came from kindness and not from obligation, she discovered her position, and adapted herself to the overthrow of all the customs of the old *régime*. She never before had been so happy (she acknowledged it long after), for she was loved for love's sake, and not because she merited our petting; but her heart was not naturally soft, and but for the fear of being worse off she would have been glad to get away. To make her less exacting, we had to excite her *amour propre*, and she had already a turn for woman's coquetry. She found it difficult to refrain from teasing and maltreating those around her, and she never could be persuaded to do the smallest thing to help others, nor even to wait upon herself. She was the only person who insisted on being waited on in the household. We did all we could of our own accord for the Prior, who was never exacting; but as Louise had observed from the first moment that he was superior to the rest of us, she insisted that she must be placed upon an equality with him, and must sit opposite to him at table, where we all ate together for economy's sake. She took her place as if she was the mistress of the household; we all laughed at first, and then we accepted it, so she claimed the place as her right. One day when M. Costejoux was there to dinner she would

not give her seat up to him, which amused the lawyer mightily, and made him take considerable interest in her "devil of a temper." He thought her pretty, made her chatter, teased her about her "aristocratism," as it was called at that time; and in short he spoiled her more than any of us, for the day after he left the Monastery he sent her from town a young lady's dress complete, with ribbons, and a hat with artificial flowers. When he next came he expected to have been thanked and kissed for it. Not at all; she was dissatisfied because her shoes were low and plain, — she wanted high heels and rosettes. This too amused him; he was always amused by her grand-princess fashions. The more he hated the nobility the more funny he thought it to see this little irreconcilable offshoot from a noble stem, that he could have crushed between his finger and thumb, fly in his face and order him about at pleasure. At first it was all play; in the end it became serious for both of them.

I who had dreamed so much of little Louise, and was prepared to devote myself to her body and soul, soon felt that she cared nothing for me unless I was of use to her, and that if she ever kissed me it was only when she wanted me to do something especially hard, to please her. When the fancy went away she forgot to make any return for anybody's services, and often was tired of her whim before it was accomplished.

All about her was deception, — to speak the language that I now understand and employ; but I took my own stand, and gave all my affection to Emilien, who so well deserved it. I had fancied that if his sister responded to my friendship I should love her more than I did him, because she was of my own age. But she would not love me, and all my heart went back to the Little Brother.

In the month of October of that year (1791) rumors of war were rife, and every one trembled for his newly acquired property. No one any longer said, "It is no concern of mine. Everybody does not go into the army, and those who do are not all killed." *Now* the cause of the war was understood by all of us. We knew that the nobles and high clergy of France were making war against the Revolution in order to take back what the Revolution had given us. These thoughts made us fierce and angry. Our young men said that if the enemy came within their reach they would fight like very devils. The peasants were afraid to lose their property, and were brave enough to fight for it if an enemy should appear.

M. Costejoux came to see us rather oftener, and Emilien began to seek news again from the outside world. One day in November, when he had just heard of his mother's illness, he was struck by the idea that he would never again see either of his parents, for it appeared certain that they intended to march with the allied armies upon France, and to re-enter it with the enemy. Talking alone with me as we were coming home from the mill, driving before us the mule laden with a sack of flour, he said, —

"Nanon, is not my position very strange? If war is declared I have always said that I would be a soldier; but if I have to serve on one side and my father and brother fight on the other, what shall I do?"

"You must not go," I said. "If you were killed, what would become of your sister?"

"Costejoux has promised me never to forsake her, and to take her to his home, and you too if you consent. Will you promise me not to leave her?"

"When the time comes you may depend on me, although Louise is not affectionate, and I should be very sorry to

quit my village. But what you fear cannot take place, because I know you will not go contrary to the will of your father."

"But don't you see that if we have a war I must either enlist or go over to the enemy? You must have heard that they are already conscripting young men able to bear arms."

"Yes, but not here. How could they compel everybody? It would take as many gendarmes as they could find recruits to force our men into the army. *Tenez! tenez!* You say such things because you want to leave me, and to be an officer."

"No, Nanon; I have no ambition. I was not brought up to it, and I do not love fighting. I was born peaceable, and I have no taste for killing my fellow-men. But it may become a matter of honor, and you would not like to see me despised."

"Oh, no indeed! I suffered too much in those old times when every one said you would never be good for anything; but things may turn out differently from what you think, and if you are not *obliged* to go, promise me that you will not leave us."

"How can you ask me that? Do you not know that I love you?"

"Of course I know it. You promised me once that when you were married I should take care of your children."

"Married? Do you think I mean to marry?"

"You told me once that you should marry some day; and ever since I have tried to learn everything that a woman ought to know, to serve your lady and to be her housekeeper."

"Ah! so you expect to wait upon my wife?"

"Won't you let me?"

"Indeed I won't. You must stand second to no one in my affections. Now do you understand?"

He took my hand in his as we stood beside the river, looking at me with anxious eyes. I was very much astonished, and fearing to give him pain, was uncertain how I might best answer him.

"And yet," I said, after a little pause, "your wife will be above me."

"How do you know that?"

"Surely, you cannot think of marrying some peasant girl, — like Brother Pascal, who had his banns published with the miller's daughter of the Bridge of Beaulieu?"

"And why not?"

"Well, were your wife a lady or a peasant girl you would love her above everything, and you would want her to be the head of your house. No; I have quite made up my mind to obey her and to please her in everything. Why do you say I must not love her, and try to serve her just as I would you?"

"Ah, Nanon," he said, as we walked on, "how pure and child-like your heart must be! Let us talk no more of this now. You are too young for me to say all that I think, and you would not understand me. Never mind. I will never do anything to cause you pain; and if I were to marry according to your idea, I should ask your approval. Now do you understand? You know I keep my word. All that I have promised you to do I have done. Remember what I now say to you, — here, standing on the edge of this little river, which sings aloud a welcome as we pass under these old willow-trees, which look like silver when the wind ruffles and turns back their leaves: you will always remember the place? See, yonder is a sort of island that some plants have made with their roots, and

near this island we have often set our nets, — your cousin Pierre and I. I stood here once before with you, when you asked me to teach you all I knew. I promised to do so; and now I swear that I will never belong more completely to any one on earth than I do to you. Does that make you unhappy?"

"No," I replied. "I wish I thought your promise could be kept. But you astonish me, for I never thought you cared so much for my regard as I do for yours. If that be so, I never will be married. I will stay unmarried ready to serve you all my life; and I give you my promise here on the bank of this river, under this old willow-tree, so that you may always remember it too."

The mule had gone homeward as we talked. Emilien, seeing him in the distance with the flour-sack sliding off his back, for he was taking a short cut through the brushwood, was obliged to run after him. I lingered. My eyes seemed dazzled by a sudden light, my feet felt heavy. Why had he said so much about his affection for me, when generally he never mentioned it, or only alluded to it on rare occasions in one or two brief words? I cannot say that I was so innocent as never to have heard of love. In the country there are few secrets about such things; but in cold climates, where people live sparingly and labor steadily, children remain children a long time, and I was young for my age. Perhaps too the idea I had long cherished of devoting myself to the service and happiness of others had kept me from vain thoughts of my own happiness. I stood there like a simpleton, asking myself what he could have meant by saying, "You cannot understand yet all that I feel;" and I wanted both to laugh and to cry, without knowing what for.

Nor do I know what prompted me at that moment to

gather a handful of willow leaves, and to put them in the bib of my apron.

From that day forward I found happiness in everything, and was glad that I had been born into the world. I was not hurt when Louise was unkind to me; I bore it patiently, and was always gay. When the Prior scolded, I was better able than before to find words that calmed his displeasure. When he was in pain, I felt more hopeful about soothing him, and was quicker in finding out the way to do so. When I saw Emilien over-tired with his gardening, I went to help him; and I was almost as good as a man with a rake or with a wheelbarrow. At the end of the season we had some splendid fruit, which we sent to M. Costejoux, who was well pleased with it. He came over to thank us, and he too seemed happy when he could spend a day among us, — talking Latin with the Prior, nonsense with Louise, or seed-time and harvest with Emilien and the laborers. I found pleasure in everything, even in listening to the Prior's Latin, which seemed to me very like French (or even our own *patois*), so like that we all could guess what he was saying. My eye and my hand were everywhere in the household. Everything was beautifully clean, and when I saw our faces reflected in the pewter plates and in the glasses it seemed to me that every one looked handsomer than before. My greatest pleasure was to take my lessons of an evening. The Prior was always present, and liked to give his opinion about everything; but he commonly went to sleep, and on winter evenings, alone in the great warm sitting-room of the Monastery, Emilien and I used to read and to discuss our reading, while the wind howled without and the crickets chirped upon the hearth within.

These talks together taught us both, for I loved to ask

questions, and I wanted to know many things which Emilien learned by degrees and taught me afterward. I worried myself about the rights of the rich and poor, of kings and subjects, — about everything, in short, that had ever happened either on land or sea. Emilien told me stories of past times. In the library there was a work in many volumes that the monks had not allowed him to read. It was called "L'Histoire des Hommes." It was a new book in those days, and did not conceal the truth nor shrink from exposing the superstition and injustice of past times. I do not know if it was a book of any value, but we read the whole of it, while the Prior snored in his great leathern chair and after having read it we found ourselves unconsciously better informed than he was, or than most of the peasants of our period. On all subjects we began to be conscious of a crowd of new ideas, and if we had but known what was going on in Paris we might have made reflections on the Revolution in advance of our age; but we only heard from the outside world when M. Costejoux came to the Monastery, and he seldom came in winter because of the bad roads which then separated us from the rest of mankind. This isolation hindered us from thinking about passing events, nor did we know that elsewhere there were troubles and sorrows because people could not agree about politics and religion.

And here I end the first part of my story, the quiet part of my life. I am about to enter on the recital of events which carried us along in their current as they did everybody else. Those who have read these pages know that my education by this time was sufficiently advanced to enable me to express myself with facility and to understand things as they came to pass. In the account I have just given

could not but speak somewhat after the peasant fashion. My thoughts fell naturally into tne words which were then familiar to me, and had I used other language I should have seemed to have thoughts and feelings that at that time I had never known. Henceforward my style will be more like that of our middle classes; for by the end of '92 I had ceased to be a peasant, except in dress and occupation.

X.

The minds of peasants, like the minds of children, are subject to delusions. We could not realize in our oasis at Valcreux the causes which led our glorious Revolution of '89 into violence and crime. All knowledge of leading events which might have prepared us for the crisis reached us through those as incapable of bringing about crime or violence as of comprehending its cause when it came. The indifference of our little commune, the obstinate optimism of our own little colony in the Monastery, led us always to believe the very best. The Prior declared that the King's flight to Varennes was very unfortunate and a great mistake, but that it would lead to good in the end.

"Louis XVI. is afraid of his people," he said. "That is wrong; the people are not ill-disposed. See how things have gone on here. There never, since the world was made, was anything so atrocious as the sale of the Church property. It was the free-thinking *bourgeoisie* who brought it about, and the people took advantage of the opportunity; but they are not unfriendly to us, and have shown consideration such as no one could have expected from them. Now let the King trust himself to his people, and very soon he will get back his authority. He has no enemies. I should like to see any peasant in our neighborhood who would show disrespect to him. Be confident, my children, that things will all come right. The laboring classes are careless, lazy, rather given to pilfering, but I know them;

they are kindly, and they don't bear malice. You remember how I used to treat them when I was steward of the community? Well, no one seems to recollect it to my disadvantage, and I shall end my days here, quietly and in peace, as the King might do on his throne."

The vision of this poor monk did not extend beyond the narrow limits of the valley of Valcreux; and all we asked was to live as he did, shut off from the rest of the world, — more especially as at first the progress of events seemed to prove that he had judged the situation rightly.

The National Assembly had declared the King's person inviolable, notwithstanding his attempt to reach the army. It dissolved itself under the impression that the new Constitution it had formed had put the finishing touch to the Revolution, and that the sole business of the Legislative Assembly would be to get that Constitution under way. No member of the first Assembly was eligible for re-election. M. Costejoux would have liked to be a deputy, but our province was still too royalist to elect him. He had many votes, but was not successful. He was not at all angry. He often went to Paris, because when our part of the country had any petition to make he was always selected to take charge of it, and was always at hand. Learned, rich, and a good speaker, he was everybody's lawyer, in a certain way.

Toward the end of '91 we became a little uneasy about the Prior. The New Assembly, which it had been expected would bring order out of the anarchy caused in Paris by the Commune, was very much dissatisfied with the King's power of *veto*. It began to persecute the clergy, and it wanted to hinder Mass, even in private houses. The King opposed these measures, and of course we were all on his side at Valcreux; for we were zealous for our Mass, and we loved the Prior, while at the same time we

were very revolutionary, and wanted to maintain the Constitution. If the opinion of the majority of Frenchmen had then prevailed, the Revolution would have stopped there. But two storms were brewing in different quarters, — one caused by the hatred of the priests and nobles against the Revolution, the other by the hatred of the revolutionists against the priests and nobles. Passion was fast taking the place of conviction. Poor rural France was crushed between two avalanches, hardly comprehending how or why, unable cordially to take sides with either party.

At the beginning of August, 1792, M. Costejoux paid us a visit, having just returned from Paris. He took Emilien aside.

"My young friend," he said, "do you know if the Prior has taken the oath to the Constitution?"

"I do not think he has," said Emilien, who never told a lie, but who feared to speak the whole truth on this occasion.

"Well, if he has not, try to get him to do so at once," said the lawyer. "Those who have been in orders are in danger. I must not tell you more, but I speak very seriously. You know I have his interest at heart."

Emilien had already tried several times to persuade the Prior to take the oath, but without success. He told me about it, and asked me to try. It was not an easy task. When I began, the Prior came near striking me.

"Am I to be worried in this way all my life?" he cried. "Not long ago I was thrown into a dungeon by my brethren because I would not promise to make the Virgin of the Fountain work miracles, in order to hinder the peasants of the neighborhood from buying our lands; and now you want me to swear that I am an honest man

and love my country. I do not deserve the affront, and I will not submit to it."

"You would be quite right," I said, "if the government were fully established, and if people were just. But things have turned out badly in many ways, and ill success leads to suspicion. If you give the authorities any reason to mistrust you, those who love you and who live with you may suffer, as well as you. Think of those two poor children of noble birth, living here while their parents are *émigrés*. They are never quite safe, even with us. Do not add to their danger — for you love Emilien — by bringing trouble to Valcreux."

"Well, if that 's the view you take of it," he said, "I must give in."

And he took the oath accordingly. I knew perfectly well that if I put it on the ground of its being for the good of others, he would give up any prejudices of his own.

After that we hoped to be left in peace; but that month of August, 1792, was a terrible month in Paris, and a month later we heard all that had taken place there. We heard of the furies of the Commune; we heard that the King was in the Temple; that decrees had been passed confiscating the property of the *émigrés;* that all priests who had not taken the oath were condemned to exile; and that domiciliary visits were authorized, to search for arms or for suspicious persons.

From these last we peasants of Valcreux had nothing to dread; we had accomplished our own revolution in 1789. We had taken all the arms in the Monastery, and some time after, all the monks had gone away of their own accord. As for Emilien, he had long foreseen that the property of his family would be confiscated, and that he

would have to endure the thought that his father and brother had taken sides against France. He accepted the situation as a man who never expected to own money or land; but we were all sorry for the King, who we could not believe was in league with the *émigrés* after what he had proclaimed concerning them. We were also terribly cast down, because we heard that our armies on the frontier had been unsuccessful. When we heard of the massacres of September in the prisons, we felt as if our peace and happiness were slipping fast away. Instead of reading and chatting together, Emilien and I occupied ourselves with out-door duties and with household labor, like those who do not care to think, and whose thoughts, if interchanged, might seem reproaches.

This may be thought singular. It is, however, a true reflection.

When young hearts, pure and honest, have put faith in justice, love, and honor, and when the future opening before them has seemed a field in which to carry out all good designs; but when, on the contrary, they discover that men are full of hatred, injustice, and too often, alas! are base and cowardly, — there rises in their hearts a feeling of consternation which takes all spirit out of them. They begin to fancy that they themselves must have in some way deserved disappointment, since men have been suffered to set them such examples.

We now consulted the Prior more than we had done of late. We had been proud of ourselves because we had acquired without his help ideas that seemed to us more advanced than his. We dared no longer plume ourselves on this advance. We were afraid that we might have been mistaken; and for all his outward vulgarity and his material way of looking at things, the Prior

much more of a philosopher than we had supposed

Children," he said one evening when we had asked his opinion of the Jacobins and of their zeal in push- forward the Revolution in spite of every obstacle, ey are all going down a slope on which they cannot themselves. There is no use talking about such , — circumstances are now stronger than they. The world has for some time been passing away. I have hed things out of this dim hole into which my fate has me, like some poor insect doomed to live in dust and tness. Don't suppose that the Revolution alone brought gs to their present pass. The Revolution did but re- e what was decayed; it has had no influence on what sound or living. Faith has long been dead. The rch has long given herself up to the interests of this ld, and has neglected her vocation. *Moi qui vous* é — I myself — do not believe everything that she taught. I accept some things, and I reject others. ve seen too much mockery of the Church's menaces prohibitions within convent walls. When I was g, there were in our underground chapel some very ent pictures of the Dance of Death, which the Prior of day caused to be whitewashed as being revolting and rd. In like manner austerities were washed away. privileged clergy of the great abbeys (who grew rich at expense) flung themselves into the worldly pleasures he age, into luxury and dissipation. We did not care ortify ourselves while they rejected mortification; and being of sufficient importance to venture with impu- upon riotous living, we simply pampered the inner , and became perfectly indifferent to the things of gion, In other monasteries I fancy they did the same.

The last three brothers were not what you have always thought them. They were not fanatics when they threatened me and imprisoned me for my plain speaking. They believed nothing, and while they tried to frighten me they were even more frightened themselves. One was a libertine, anxious to secularize himself; one was a fool, who, although he did not fear God, feared hell whenever he read an order from the archbishop; and the third, that pale, solemn Pamphilion, was an ambitious man, bent upon playing some part in the world. He may probably become a demagogue, since he has not been able to distinguish himself by his clerical zeal. But do you know what it is that has been the ruin of the clergy? It is the indifference that succeeds fanaticism; and indifference, as the inevitable punishment of fanaticism, leads to loss of power. Such men as those who instigated the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and who have always been in opposition to both kings and people, doing evil without remorse and preaching cruelty without fear when even it is needed to further their own interests, come to a bad end. Nothing can live long that lives on falsehood; it is so bad that it must die. You ask about the Jacobins. So far as I can see, they are men who place the Revolution above everything, even above their own consciences, just as certain priests have placed the Church higher than God himself. The clergy, when they tortured and burned heretics, said: 'It is for the good of Christianity.' The Jacobins say, in persecuting the moderates, 'It is for the good of the cause;' and the more enthusiastic really believe that it is for the good of humanity. Let them beware. Humanity has a wide meaning. I do not think that the cause of humanity will ever be advanced by what is evil; I believe that harm is

done to it — harm for a long while — by any private personal wrong-doing. However, I am but a poor man looking forward to things that will come after me. I shall soon be dead. You may know better hereafter, you young people. You may have a chance to see whether the anger and the cruelty always latent in men's beliefs can ever lead to what is good and pure. I don't believe it. I think the Church of the past has perished because of its own cruelty. If the Jacobins perish too, remember the massacres of September, and then you will say as I do that a new Church cannot be built out of what has caused the old one to decay."

Emilien remarked that perhaps the massacres of September and the persecution of the moderates were not the work of the Jacobin party, but the excesses of wretches whom the Jacobins could not control.

"That may be. Would to God that it may prove so!" replied the Prior. "There may be good intentions even among those who seem to us the most mistaken; but remember what I tell you when you pass judgment upon these things by and by. Those who dip their hands in blood will never accomplish their good purposes, and if the world is ever saved it will be by other means than those we see before us. My own opinion is that the clergy are responsible for all this evil. They set on foot the first reign of terror; their enemies have but turned their weapons against themselves. How can the victims of violence become grateful learners of the truth? Evil begets evil. However, enough of this. Let us try to live in peace, and make or meddle in none of these things. Let us live the best we can up to our duty; we shall not be here long, and discussions of this sort cannot make our pot boil."

That was the first and only time the Prior ever told us

what he really thought of things. He had formed his own opinion of the clergy, but a sense of what was befitting in a monk, or a life-long habit of submission, withheld him from expressing himself on so delicate a subject in many words. Had he always thought these things, as he himself believed? Perhaps upon that point he may have been mistaken. Perhaps he never began to think deeply until he passed three days in prison. He had early swallowed so strong a dose of prudence that he was glad to drop the subject, and our questions importuned rather than interested him. He had ended his confession in the most material and selfish manner, though his heart was warm and generous. To him the world was a fierce struggle, and his ideal existence was that of a mole. He hoped for something better in another world, but without any comfortable certainty as to the life to come. One day he abruptly said to us, —

"They have so bedaubed the face of the Almighty that I can hardly see what He looks like; it reminds me of a page over which so much blood and so much ink has been spilled that one can barely tell what else is there."

The Prior did not seem to care much. He was greatly more excited when the frost injured the fruit-trees, or when the thunder turned the cream. Sometimes a stranger might have thought him a mere animal; but he was really a good man, very intelligent, and not badly educated. He had, however, been so long suppressed that he could not breathe like other men, either physically or morally.

While the Prior thus strove to detach himself from the outside world, Mariotte, my cousins, and old Dumont took little interest in what was passing. The declaration that the country was in danger, and the enthusiasm consequent on voluntary enlistments had not reached our part of

France. We did not hear of the decrees until their worst consequences were over. In our valley there were only a few idlers who went off to the army. Emilien never at that period thought that it might be his duty to follow their example. He knew that his brother must be fighting on the other side, and he waited for the turn of events to guide him, until one day he received a singular letter from M. Prémel, the manager at Franqueville. It said: —

"MONSIEUR, — I have received a letter from your father, M. le Marquis, on the subject of your present situation and that of Mademoiselle, your sister. This is what he says: —

"'Furnish M. Emilien with the money necessary to leave France and to join me in the army of Condé. I take it for granted he remembers that he is a Frenchman, and that he will not be deterred by the prospect of danger from carrying out this determination. Communicate with him upon the subject, and when you have fitted him out properly with a good horse and a good servant, give him one hundred louis. If he has the wish and the courage to obey me, spare nothing to assist him. If not, tell him that I give him up entirely, and shall no longer consider him a member of my family. As to his young sister, Mademoiselle Louise, I desire that Dumont and her nurse shall take her to Nantes, where my relative, Madame de Montifault, is prepared to take the place of her dead mother.'"

"Then my mother is dead!" cried Emilien, the letter falling from his hand, "and this is how I hear of it!"

I took his hands in mine. He was pale and trembling, for no one can lose a mother without strong emotion; but it was impossible he could shed many tears for a woman who had never loved him, and whom he knew so slightly. When he grew calm he was appalled at the way his father treated him, not even having considered him worthy to be written to, but only to be communicated with through

his man of business. For one moment he fancied it an invention of Prémel's. However, he soon saw evidence that it was not so, on reading the end of the letter. The steward continued: —

"Monsieur le Marquis has no idea of the present situation. In the first place he fancies that I am in receipt of his rents, which I am not, his property being sequestered; or else his idea is that I must have laid by money in former years, which is equally unfounded, for the farmers have refused to pay their rents, and everything here has fallen into confusion through the anarchy of the peasantry. I am not now living at Franqueville, the château having become extremely dangerous for those who have the misfortune to be considered friends of the nobles. I have gone into a modest lodging at Limoges, and it would not be in my power to make the former nurse of Mademoiselle Louise leave Franqueville to go into the western provinces, now in open insurrection. Since Dumont is with you it would be proper for you to take your sister yourself to Madame de Montifault. For this purpose I am ready to give you two hundred francs from my own pocket, and when you return from that journey I will endeavor to obtain a sufficient loan to enable you to leave France. Let me know as soon as possible whether you have made up your mind to emigrate, and whether I shall make the necessary preparations for your outfit. But the difficulty of getting money is so great that I advise you not to count upon the hundred louis mentioned by M. le Marquis. I have not got them, nor have I credit to borrow them. Your family has even less credit than myself at this moment, and any money-lender who advances money on your signature and on the faith of your father's letter, which I retain as security, would require you to pay an enormous interest, to say nothing of hush-money to keep your secret, which would cost you dear. It is my duty to tell you all these things, which, however, will not probably decide you to remain, as in case you do so your family will cast you off forever."

"Then let them cast me off," exclaimed Emilien; "it will not be the first proof that they have given me of a want of affection! If my father had written to me himself, if he had called upon me for obedience with the slightest tenderness, I would have sacrificed everything, — that is, not my conscience, but my honor and my life; for I have often thought what I would do in that event, and had resolved, in such a case, to rush forward and fling myself on the bayonets of French soldiers in my first battle, with my arms and my eyes raised to heaven, protesting that I was a true Frenchman to the end. But things have turned out otherwise. My father has treated me as if I were a soldier he could buy to aid his cause, — as if a horse, a lackey, a well-filled valise, and a hundred louis would enlist me in the service of Prussia or of Austria. If I refuse he says, 'Do as you please; die of hunger, if you like, I have nothing more to do with you.' I take my choice! I choose to work, and to be faithful to my country! My father I have never known; I will be no man's son rather than be recreant to France. The tie is broken! Nanette, you are witness!" So saying he tore the letter into a thousand pieces. "You see, Nanette! I am no longer a noble. I am a peasant and a Frenchman!"

Emilien flung himself into a chair, and great tears streamed down his cheeks. I was overwhelmed at seeing him so moved. He had never before wept in the presence of any one; possibly he had never wept since his infancy. I began to weep too and to kiss him, which I had never done before. He returned my caresses and pressed me to his breast, still weeping, and it never struck us with surprise that we were so much to each other. It seemed perfectly natural for me to share his grief after we had shared so many happy hours.

At last we had to consider about Louise, and whether we would send her to Nantes. Nantes! Ah! if we had known what was soon to happen at Nantes, how gladly we should have decided on keeping her at Valcreux! Perhaps even when we read in M. Prémel's letter of the insurrection in La Vendée, we had some presentiment through which Heaven gave us warning. Be that as it may, Emilien decided for Louise as promptly as for himself.

"My sister shall not leave me in these troubled times," he said. "If this Madame de Montifault, whom I never heard of, wishes to be a mother to her, we can see about it by-and-by. I will not expose my poor Louise to some fresh tyranny. I would rather trust her to the mother of M. Costejoux, who is kind and amiable. But we have time to think all that over. Children are not yet proscribed; surely they will not persecute children! Louise is well off here; let her know nothing of this letter. She has no mind to be made up. It is for me to decide for her: and I refuse to send her away."

He wanted to write an answer to M. Prémel.

"Don't write," said the Prior, as soon as he heard of it. "You were wrong to have torn up his letter. Perhaps it was a trap that I could have detected; but trap or not, the man would transmit your answer to your father, and it would lead to an irreconcilable rupture with him. Avoid this if you can, — agree to nothing and say nothing; do as if you were dead, — it is the wisest way."

Emilien — in disgust rather than from policy — took the Prior's advice, and did not send any answer. M. Prémel probably concluded that his letter had been stopped on its way, and kept very quiet from fear of the consequences.

Thus had we once more passed safely through a crisis in our affairs, and the news we soon after heard made us more hopeful. Dumouriez had won the battle of Valmy. Our troops had conquered Nice and Savoy. The country forgot past troubles. The Convention met, and moderate counsels seemed once more to prevail.

"I told you that all would come right," said the Prior, returning to his optimism as soon as the sky grew a little more blue. "The Commune is put down. Those forty days' of anarchy were accidental after all. The Gironde is well disposed; it may possibly depose the King, but if it assigns him the Luxembourg as his residence he may be very comfortable, and he will be glad of rest after all he has gone through. He will be like me, — I never was at my ease until I was nobody."

It was a terrible shock to these illusions when in a few months the Convention, at the close of a twelve days' trial, sentenced the King to death and instituted the Revolutionary Tribunal. Our sadness was aggravated by the hard times. Assignats fell far below their value, specie was hidden away, trade was dead; and such horrible things were reported of the Revolutionary Commissioners sent into the provinces that our people dreaded to go to any town, and neither bought nor sold anything. We lived by exchange and barter among ourselves, and if anybody had a five-franc piece he hid it in the ground. Requisitions had deprived us of our live stock; we had no longer any animals. The Prior being sick and needing *bouillon*, I had my last lamb killed for him. Rosette had been long sold to buy clothes for Louise, who had had nothing to wear, for she had to give up being dressed as a young lady; and the Prior himself wore the *carmagnole*, like a man of the people.

XI.

As for Emilien, he had never given up his peasant's costume since he assumed it after laying aside his monk's garments.

I made our clothes last as long as possible; I used to sit up at night with Mariotte to patch them with all kinds of pieces. Sometimes the Prior would have blue elbows on his gray jacket; and as Emilien and Pierre were still growing, their clothes were lengthened out in every kind of way. Our larder would have been very poor but for the game, which no longer belonged to any one, and was shot and snared by everybody. During more than a year that this poverty lasted every one seemed to have changed both his habits and his character. It seemed a small matter to be relieved of feudal services, when all the taxes that the rich paid formerly now fell on us. There was nobody to pay for work, and the uncertainty as to what might happen made every one even neglect that land he had been so eager to possess. Then all the men became poachers, and marauded on the lands that were in sequestration. They lived openly by pillage, and they became wild, timid, and mischievous. Ah, if the peasantry could only have combined to assist one another, as they did in the first stages of the Revolution! But poverty makes people selfish and suspicious. They would wrangle for a root, and would fight for two. Ah, how far we were now from the Feast of the Federation! The old man had said truly that all that day was too beautiful to last.

We had been so much worried and threatened by those in our neigborhood who lived nearer than we did to the town, and therefore felt more of its influence, that we had been forced into electing a new municipality; and we had replaced our old friends by young men, more bold and less honest, who, without in the least understanding what was going on in Paris, talked at random in big words, and commanded fêtes which were called patriotic, and which were simply foolish and incomprehensible. We were sorry to let our bells and the small remains of plate in the Monastery chapel be carried away, for our peasants at the bottom of their hearts were slavishly superstitious, and feared to displease the saints and to provoke some punishment; but they had to submit, being even more afraid of the Girondists and the Mountain, of the Committee of Public Safety, the Convention, and the Commune, — all of whom got mixed up in their heads; and they did not know the difference. I doubt if we really understood that difference in the Monastery, events moved so fast, and the troubles in Paris were so complicated in many ways.

The time came, however, when Emilien got a sudden glimpse of the truth. He got a letter from Paris from M. Costejoux telling him that he should soon be in Limoges, where he was named colleague of the commissioners selected to hasten the enlistment of troops and the execution of the orders of the Convention.

"Listen, Nanon," said Emilien; "I do not know what to make of Costejoux. I thought he was a Girondist, — and so he was, I am sure; but he can be one no longer, for he has accepted a position in which he will be obliged to show great severity. He says he shall not have time to come to the Monastery, and would like to see me in the

town. Of course I shall go. But before I go, — I would not like to deceive you, Nanette, — I will tell you what I have resolved to do. I have not been drawn for a soldier, but I can enlist; and I intend to do so. It is clearly my duty, since half if not two-thirds of France is in revolt against the government, and the enemy is pouring in on all sides to re-establish monarchy. For a long time I believed that we could establish a republic that would be wise and brotherly. I do not know now if we could have done it, even with wiser chiefs and less embittered foes; but time moves fast, and ruin is drawing near unless we all make one great effort, with courage and self-sacrifice. To do that we must subdue our own poor hearts, my Nanette. These cruelties ordered by the Committee and sanctioned by the Convention, this abominable tyranny of one citizen over another, these acts of injustice, these denunciations, these exactions, and these massacres that we hear about render every one mad with despair and anger; yet if the royalist conspiracies and their alliance with the enemy render such atrocities necessary (as they say is the case), what part should I take? Must I go over to foreigners, who under pretext of putting down anarchy desire the partition of France? Are not those who have invited them to interfere the basest of all Frenchmen? Are not those who punish treason the best hope of their country, even if they do abuse the right of punishment? Ah, how I hate them! But the others I despise; and it seems to me that we ought to do anything rather than submit to the shame that they wish to force upon us. These Jacobin leaders whom the Prior deems so noxious because they have done evil that good may come, I view as heroes turned to madmen. They are cruel, but are hardly aware of it; to obtain their ends they make use of a pack

of wild beasts, who are more cruel than themselves, — being cruel either for the mere pleasure of cruelty, or for the foolish wish to make themselves of consequence, or for the excitement of giving orders. We must put up with them for the present, because if we overthrow them we shall go from bad to worse, and may even cease to be Frenchmen. Yes! Let us be French at any price! That is the important thing! You see, do you not, that I must now do what I can. I shall say to Costejoux, 'You have sheltered and fed me. I have labored for you; I would continue to do so if I could. But it is no longer a question of cultivating the soil; the question is, whether we shall have any land to cultivate. Give my sister a home, — I trust her in your hands, — but let me go and fight for France. I am disinclined for strife; I hate war, I abhor bloodshed; but I am now ready to accept anything. I can change my disposition, — I can become a species of wild beast, and then if I abhor myself I can die; but so long as I have a country to defend I will fight, I will endure; and I will care for naught else while I can help to save her."

This vehemence alarmed me, and at first I wept like a child; but as he grew excited I became so too, and when he had finished I could say nothing.

"Do you disapprove?" he said. "Tell me what you are thinking of."

"Of Louise," I said. "I would like to go anywhere where she goes, for the sake of relieving your anxiety; but were I to leave the Prior, who would take care of him?"

He flung his arms around me, and kissed me fervently.

"You are thinking of those who will have to stay behind," he cried: "that proves that you can see me go without flinching. You understand my duty. You are

very brave. Yes, let us think of Louise and our old friend. We must try to have them both remain together, either in the Monastery or under the roof of Costejoux, who, being attached to the government, will be all-powerful in his own part of the world. I want to speak to him about them, and I will set out for Limoges as soon as possible."

Next day he made up a little bundle of his clothes, which he hung on a stick over his shoulder, and went off on foot to the town, promising to come back and to take leave of us before setting out for the army. I was very sad, but I took courage. I did not have any presentiment that he was in immediate danger.

I will tell what happened on his journey, for his adventures are more interesting than the sorrow with which I contended while awaiting his return. Dumont went with him, and he told me part of what I have to tell. The good old man had laid up his savings with M. Costejoux, whose step-brother was a banker. He wanted, without saying a word to Emilien, to make a will leaving his all to him. He had come to this determination after an accident that had happened to him when he was drunk, and from which he escaped by a miracle. But as he said he might not get off so well next time, and he meant to get things settled at once. He told Mariotte, —

"I have no children, and in the Franqueville family I never loved any one but poor Emilien. I have got about two hundred francs a year; my love for drink, which came upon me late in life, will prevent my laying up more capital, for I drink up my little income. But I never mean to touch the principal, and M. Costejoux must find out some way to keep it out of my hands."

As soon as they reached Limoges they hastened to

the house of M. Costejoux. They found him much excited.

"Citizens!" he said roughly, and without the usual welcome, "I wish to know first of all what are your political sentiments concerning the terrible circumstances in which we now stand."

"I do not ask what yours are at this moment," replied Emilien; "but as I have come on purpose to tell you mine, I shall do it without knowing whether you will approve or no. I wish to be a soldier, and to serve no cause but the cause of my country and the Revolution. I have come to ask your protection for my sister."

"Protection! Who can promise any protection nowadays? And what do you mean by talking of enlisting when the *levée en masse* has been proclaimed? We are all in for it."

"I had not heard of it. Well, I am glad that I am all ready to march."

"But your family?"

"I know nothing further about them; and I have refused what they wished me to accept."

"Because they wanted you to join them?"

"I do not say *that:* I *did not* say so."

"Do you deny it?"

"Pray, do not ask me. It is enough that you know my sentiments, and the purpose that brings me here. If you can hasten my incorporation into a regiment that is ordered to the front, I beg you to do so."

"Wretched boy!" cried M. Costejoux, "you are trying to deceive me. You are feigning noble sentiments and abusing my foolish trust. You intend to desert and to pass over to the enemy. See, here is the proof!"

And he placed before Emilien a letter signed by the

Marquis de Franqueville, and addressed to M. Prémel. It ran in substance as follows: —

"Since my son Emilien wishes to join me, and his flight in present circumstances — both from want of money, and from the tyrannical suspicions of the authorities — may be difficult, you may advise him to enlist as a volunteer under the Republic — and to do like many other gentlemen of good family, who find means to desert over to our side."

"It is infamous!" cried Emilien, beside himself with anger. "My father never wrote that letter!"

"It is in his own handwriting," replied M. Costejoux. "Look at it! Will you swear upon your honor that it is a forgery?"

Emilien hesitated. He had seen so little of his father's writing! He had not a specimen in his possession.

"I cannot swear to that," he said. "But I will swear by all that is most sacred, that I have never consented to dishonor myself; and that if my father has ever believed me capable of doing so, his belief has been founded upon lies invented by Prémel.

He spoke so eagerly and so proudly that M. Costejoux, after having looked him in the face without his flinching, said hurriedly, —

"It may be so; but who knows? This morning an order for your arrest has been made out by the Revolutionary Tribunal of this province. Prémel is in prison — he has long been suspected of keeping up communication with his old employers. All his papers have been seized, and this was one of the first that came to hand on opening his portfolio. If authentic, it condemns you. And authentic *it is*, for here are other letters and papers which seem to corroborate it. Trials of this kind are too quickly

ended to call in experts. There is but one thing to be done, if, as I should be glad to find, you are really innocent. You must protest, and if you can must prove that you have never authorized Prémel to send in your submission to your father."

"I *can* prove it. The Prior knows that I returned no answer to his order to emigrate."

"You returned no answer? Then you did not refuse?"

"The Prior —"

"Say the citizen Fructueux. There are no more priors; there are no more priests."

"Just as you please. Citizen Fructueux will tell you —"

"He will tell me nothing. They will not waste time in summoning him; and for his sake I advise you not to draw attention upon him. In three days you will be released or condemned."

"To death?"

"Or to imprisonment until the peace, according as they find you more or less guilty."

"More or less! And do you, my former friend, admit no doubt of my guilt? Or is it as my counsel that you are making me aware that others will not admit the possibility of my innocence?"

M. Costejoux wiped his forehead angrily. His eyes blazed with excitement; then he turned pale, and seating himself as if he could no longer stand, he said, —

"Young man, I have a terrible mission to fulfil. You see in me no friend, you see in me no counsel. I am an inquisitor and a judge. Yes! I, who last year was a Girondist when I left home with the illusions of inexperience, have now become what every true patriot is forced to be. I have witnessed the political incapacity of the

better class of moderates and the infamous treach
the greater number. Those who have been sacrific
a set-off against those who have kindled civil war
provinces. They were an obstacle to the autho
men who sought to save their country. We were
to crush them. We were forced to tread underf
pity, all affection, all remorse. We have been for
kill women and children! — I tell you we were
to do it!" he repeated, biting his handkerchief. "
you we shall be forced to do it again. If you hav
hesitated between your father and the Republic y
lost, and I cannot save you!"

"I did not hesitate one moment; but if no o
believe me, and I am deprived of all means to pr
of course I am lost. Well, Monsieur, so be it!
ready to die. I am very young, but I feel that m
cast in times when life can be held lightly. I c
without weakness; may I hope that my sister a
friends —"

"Don't speak of them! Do not utter their nam
not remind any one of their existence! No de
tion from your commune has as yet been made
them. Let them stay where they are, and be forgo

"I shall follow your advice, you may be sure;
proves that you will do all in your power to save
For that I thank you. I ask nothing for myself.
can send me to prison. My bitterest thought
that you have doubted my word."

M. Costejoux appeared much moved. Dumont
his feet, protesting the innocence and patriotism o
lien, and imploring his old friend to save him.

"I cannot," replied M. Costejoux. "Think o
own safety."

"I do not care for it," cried Dumont; "I am an old man. They may do what they like to me; and since you can do nothing for my young master, let me be accused, imprisoned, and if it comes to the worst, guillotined with him!"

"Hush! hush!" cried Costejoux, "there are those who are capable of taking you at your word."

"Yes, hush, Dumont!" said Emilien, throwing his arms round him. "You must not die. You are my heir. I bequeath you my sister!"

And he added, turning to M. Costejoux. "Now, Monsieur, let us end all this; have me arrested, since you think me a liar and a coward."

"Did anybody see you come in to this house?" said the lawyer, impatiently.

"We made no secret of it," said Emilien; "anybody might have seen us."

"Did you speak to any one?"

"We met nobody we knew. We had nothing to say."

"Did you give your names to the *familiar* who showed you into my office?"

"We do not know who you mean. Your servant knew us, and showed us in without asking our names."

"Well, depart!" cried M. Costejoux, opening a secret door hidden behind the shelves of his library. "Leave the town without a word to anybody, and without stopping. I tell you that if you are caught, my head will pay for what I am now doing. But I sent for you to come here, when I wanted to talk to you about my own affairs. I did not then suppose that there were any charges against you. No man shall say that I lured you into a snare. Begone!"

XII.

Without a word even of thanks, Emilien took Dumont's arm, and led him down the staircase. He crossed the street with him, and took him back into the road along which they had come that morning, saying, —

"Go straight on without hurry, and without looking behind you. Stop nowhere, and do not seem to be waiting for me. I must say a few last words to M. Costejoux; I will join you at the fork of the road. But do not wait there till I come, or we may both be lost. If you do not see me there, you will find me before long."

Dumont obeyed without understanding his meaning. But when he had walked a mile and a half he grew uneasy; Emilien had not rejoined him. Then he said to himself that as Emilien knew the roads better than he did, he had probably taken a short cut and might be before him. So he went on. When he reached the first post-house he wanted to stop, but he saw that he was closely observed by comers and goers, and fearing to awaken suspicion he went forward and slept in a wood. He reached the Monastery the next morning, having in his eagerness to rejoin his master walked rapidly the last part of the way.

Alas! Emilien was not there, and we waited for him in vain. He had contrived to save his old servant, but had not been willing to compromise M. Costejoux; he had gone back to his house, and going up the secret stair had re-entered his room. "Since I am accused of treachery,"

said quietly, "I have come back to give myself up to
authorities."
He was going on to say, "I thank you, but I will not
ng suspicion on you," when a meaning look from
Costejoux, who was writing, warned him to be silent.
e door to the ante-chamber was open, and a man dressed
a *carmagnole* of fine cloth, with a liberty-cap on his
ad and a scarf round his waist, appeared upon the
eshold, dragging behind him a great sword, and look-
round him like a vulture about to pounce upon some
or little bird.
At first Emilien did not know this man, until he ex-
imed sharply, —
"Ah, there he is! We need not send after him!"
Then Emilien recognized him. It was Brother Pamphi-
n, the former monk of Valcreux, — he who had insti-
ted the imprisonment of Père Fructueux in the dungeon
refusing to aid and abet false miracles; he who the old
ior had told us was an ambitious man who would stick
nothing; he who hated Emilien. He was a member of
Revolutionary Tribunal at Limoges, and had great
uence over its decisions, being the most skilful inquisi-
and the most implacable *sans culotte* among them.
As Pamphilion went on to interrogate Emilien in the
ce of M. Costejoux, the young man was seized with such
gust for him that he refused to answer, and was forthwith
t to prison surrounded by a guard of *sans culottes* armed
h pikes, who shouted through the streets, —
'Here 's another of them! Here 's an aristocrat who
nted to desert to the enemy, and who is going over the
ntier of *Monte à regret!*" Some workmen in the street
uted in reply, *Vive la guillotine*, and insulted the poor
soner. The greater part of those they met, however,

made believe that they did not hear. There were fears, and counter-fears, — fears of the Republic, and fears of the reaction. For though the nobles were in exile, there were plenty of moderate *bourgeois* who did not interfere with the Jacobins, but who seemed upon the watch, taking notes how things were passing, that those compromised might be punished when the other side came back into power.

When Dumont told us what he had seen, and marvelled that his young master had not arrived, I saw at once that Emilien had gone back and given himself up, — and I thought it was all over with him. But I did not feel the grief I might have done, or rather I had no time to feel it. I suppose I had already something of the resolute spirit that has since never deserted me in critical situations, for the thought came to me at once that I must save him. It was foolhardy, but I did not think it so. I thought it wise ; and a blind protest rose up obstinately in my heart against thinking it was impossible. I would not consult any one. I was resolved only to risk myself ; but myself I was resolved to risk without any reserve. In the night I made up a small bundle of clothes ; I took all the little money I possessed ; I wrote a few lines to the Prior to tell him not to be uneasy about me, and to make others believe that he had sent me away on some errand. I went stealthily and slipped this note under his door ; then I passed out through one of the breaches, and at dawn I was far on my way to Limoges.

I had never gone so far from home before ; but I had often looked over the landscape from high places, and I knew all the belfries, all the villages and their names, all the roads, their directions and their intersections. Besides I knew a little geography, especially that of

our own province, which saved me from losing my way and wasting my time by asking questions. For my better security I had copied from a map, during the night, a plan of the country through which I was about to travel.

It took me two whole days to reach Limoges, and there was no hope of any stage or other vehicle upon the highway. They were rarely seen now. Horses and carriages had been requisitioned for the use of the armies, and rascals who confiscated for their own advantage under pretext of patriotism had put everybody else on foot. The weather was beautiful. I slept under a straw rick, to economize my money and to avoid observation. I lived upon the bread and cheese that I had with me in a little basket. I laid my large hat over my face, and slept profoundly. I had accomplished the full day's journey of a man.

Before daylight I woke up. I ate some bread and cheese, after washing my feet in a little stream of clear water. I rejoiced to find that I had no blisters on my feet, though I had walked barefoot; and I felt sure that though tired, I could walk my next stage. Then I prayed God to give me help, and set out again.

I reached Limoges that evening without accident or delay, and inquired for the house of M. Costejoux, which I found easily. I went up to it boldly, and asked to speak with him. They answered that he was at supper, and that they did not like to disturb him.

I answered that a patriot like M. Costejoux must be always ready to listen to an *enfant du peuple*, and requested them to tell him what I said. A few minutes after, I was shown up into his dining-room, where I was nearly overcome by seeing him surrounded by half-a-dozen men, all with unpleasant faces, who had just got up from

table; one or two of them were lighting pipes, which at that day was considered vulgar. The message that the servant had brought in from me turned all their eyes upon me. They looked at me and laughed, and one of them patted my cheek with his great hairy hand, which alarmed me. But I had to play my part, and I concealed my disgust at such a liberty. I too glanced round at all of them. I did not recognize any one of them, which was a great relief to me, since none of them would know me.

Happily I knew nothing of the danger of meeting that odious brother Panphilion, for Dumont had not seen him, and did not know of his conversion to the faith of the *sans culottes*. Luckily he was not present, and I looked about for M. Costejoux, who was standing near the stove with his back to me.

He turned and saw me. I never shall forget his look; how much was said in that one glance! I understood him thoroughly. I approached him and said coolly, resuming the language of our peasantry, — which I had not forgotten, though I now spoke differently, — and assuming the revolutionary accent, —

"Is that you, Citizen Costejoux?"

He was probably surprised by my penetration, and by my skill in not compromising him; but he concealed his feelings.

"Yes, it 's I," he answered; "and you, young *citoyenne*, — who are you, and what can I do for you?"

I replied by giving him a false name, and speaking as if I came from a place at some distance from our neighborhood. I added that I heard he wanted a servant-girl to wait upon his mother, and that I had come to offer myself.

"All right," he replied, "my mother is in the country; but I know what she wants, and I will question you by and by. Go downstairs and get some supper."

He said a few words to his *famulier*, who, notwithstanding equality, took me to the kitchen. There I did not speak a word except to say "thank you" for the food set before me; and I was careful to ask no questions lest if they put any to me I should have to reply by awkward falsehoods. I ate my supper quickly, and sat down in the chimney corner, shutting my eyes like a person weary and drowsy, and hoping no one would notice me. Ah, how many things I wanted to know as I sat there! Emilien might have been tried and executed. I said to myself:

"If I have got here too late to save him, it is not my fault, and God in His mercy will let me soon rejoin him. He will let me die of grief. Meantime I must keep awake, and not yield to my weariness."

They say warmth rests the weary, and I think it is true. I warmed myself like a dog who has come in from hunting. I had walked sixty miles barefoot in two days, and I was but eighteen years old.

I listened without seeming to be listening to all that passed around me, and I feared every moment that another servant-man of M. Costejoux might come in, — a man who looked after his horses, and who having often been with him to Valcreux would recognize me. I was prepared to invent something that would make him understand my situation. I did not hesitate. I could not believe that any one could turn against us who had ever known Emilien. It seemed to me impossible that any one who had once known him could wish to do him harm.

The servant in question did not appear, and from the conversation going on among the rest I got no information

about what was interesting me most deeply. I however learned enough to comprehend the situation of M. Costejoux, who had been sent from Paris into his own department to assist the deputies from the Revolutionary Tribunal, and was forced to present to them the out-and-out patriots of Limoges and its neighborhood, — in other words, all the madmen and rascals among its inhabitants. It is sad to say it, but just then it was the scum that was floating on the top, and good men lacked courage to serve the Revolution. Too many moderates had been executed and imprisoned. All action was in the hands of — I will not say fanatics, but robbers who went to and fro from town to town, or lazy drunken workmen. To serve the Terror had become a profession, — a refuge against poverty for some, an opportunity to rob and murder offered to others. That was the terrible misfortune of the Republic, and it led to its ruin.

The servants of M. Costejoux were at no great pains, as they talked among themselves, to disguise their contempt and their disgust for the men he was compelled to seat at his table; and they were especially humiliated by having to wait on Citizen Piphaigne, a ferocious butcher, whose talk was all of driving aristocrats to the *abattoir*, and on Boudenfle the grocer, who thought himself a small edition of Marat, and asked for six hundred heads in the district; and on Carabit the tip-staff, whose occupation was the denunciation of *suspects*, and who appropriated to himself their goods and their money.

At the end of about an hour I was summoned to the office of M. Costejoux, where I found him alone. He closed the door as soon as I came in, and said: "What did you come here for? Do you want to be the ruin of the Prior and Louise?"

"I came to save Emilien," I replied.

"You are crazy!"

"No, I have come to save him."

I said it firmly, but I felt like death, and a cold sweat broke out on all my limbs; but I wanted to force M. Costejoux to tell me at once if Emilien were still living.

"Then you don't know," he said, "that he has been condemned?"

"To be imprisoned till the peace?" I said, resolved to know the worst.

"Yes, till the peace, — or till they decide to exterminate all suspected persons."

I drew a long breath. I saw that I had time before me.

"Who denounced him?" I went on to say. "Were not you at his trial, — you who knew him?"

"That infamous rascal Prémel tried to save himself by accusing Emilien. He boasted that he kept up a correspondence with the Marquis de Franqueville in order to have proofs against him and his family; and he declared that Emilien had written to him that he intended to emigrate, in a letter which, nevertheless, they failed to find, — it was not in his portfolio. I hoped to get the better of his testimony by my own, but that ex-monk Pamphilion was present. He hates Emilien; he said that he had known him as a royalist and a bigot. He wanted them to pronounce sentence of death against him on the spot, and he came very near being listened to. I turned their attention by throwing all the odium of the business on Prémel, who was condemned to transportation. All I could do was to save Emilien's life — until fresh orders."

I listened to each word that fell from M. Costejoux without giving way to any sign of feeling, and I noticed

the change in his accent and his face. It was evident that he had suffered terribly since he had changed his political base. He had adopted his convictions and accepted the post offered him in all sincerity, believing his duties the outcome of his patriotic principles; but they were contrary to his generous and trustful disposition. I watched him, to see how far I might go with him. It seemed to me as if he were disposed to aid me.

"Don't talk to me about *further orders*," I said. "You must contrive at once to free Emilien."

"What folly!" he cried quickly. "It is impossible! His sentence has been passed in accordance with all the forms ordained by the Republic."

"But it is an unjust sentence, too quickly passed and based upon no proofs!" I cried. "I know that a sentence can be appealed from!"

"You know, I see, somewhat about the past; but the past is dead and gone. There is no appeal from the sentence of a Revolutionary Tribunal."

"Then what do people do to save their friends when they are innocent? What steps do you mean to take to save an innocent young man whom you esteem and love, — who came back here because you told him, 'It will cost me my head if it is found out that I helped you to escape?'"

"I can do nothing at present, unless I try one thing; which will not content you, but which may be useful. I can — at least I hope I can — get him transferred from this town to another prison. Here under the eye of Pamphilion, who is a viper, and of Piphaigne, who is a wild beast, he runs great risks. Elsewhere, where he is not known, he may he overlooked until the peace."

"The peace! And when will that be? We are told that we are beaten everywhere! They say the aristocrats

now hope that the enemy will get the best of it, and set free your prisoners. Maybe it is not wise of you to make so many people desperate and unhappy; it may drive them to desire and to promote the victory of our enemies."

I was speaking very imprudently. I became conscious of it when I saw the lawyer's lips quiver with anger.

"Take care, little *amoureuse!*" he cried bitterly. "You are betraying yourself, and bringing suspicion on your lover."

I felt myself insulted.

"I am not in love," I answered vehemently. "I am not old enough, and I am an honest girl. Don't insult me, — I have sorrows enough. I would do what I am doing now for his sister, for the Prior, for you if you were in danger. Some day perhaps you may be in danger as well as others. Perhaps the *sans culottes* will not find you cruel enough, — or maybe the aristocrats will come back again and be the stronger party. Then perchance I may be watching *your* prison doors, and trying if I cannot save you! Do you think I would do nothing if I saw you in trouble?"

He looked at me with surprise, and said something between his teeth that I did not fully understand; but long afterward I knew what he meant, — *nature d'héroine!* He took my hand, and looked at it, then turned it and gazed into the palm as fortune-tellers do.

"You will live!" he said; "you will accomplish your work in life. I know not what that work may be, but whatever you *will*, you will accomplish. There is less chance for me. Look here! I am thirty-five; I shall never be fifty. Shall I live long enough to see the final triumph of the Republic? If I shall, I ask no more."

"Can you really believe in palmistry, M. Costejoux,

when you will not believe in God? Well, tell me, will Emilien live? It may be written in my hand."

"I see that you will have a long illness — or a great grief; perhaps —"

"No; I see you know nothing! You said my will would accomplish whatever it pleased, — and I *will* that he shall not die. So! Now you must help me."

"Help you? And suppose, though he may not have entertained that plan of desertion, he should now be won over by the example of his family?"

"Ah, now you have given up your faith in him! You are growing suspicious."

"Yes; nowadays one is forced to be afraid of one's own shadow, afraid almost of oneself, after one has discovered the close net-work of treason and cowardice and weakness which enwraps our poor Republic."

"The more you frighten people the more cowards there will be."

"You are brave, and yet you might be treacherous too, for love's sake — pardon me! I mean for the sake of a dear friend. How old are you?"

"Eighteen, when the grapes ripen."

"Eighteen in two months! Ah, you remind me of the country; of those lovely little green plums. I remember the days when I climbed your trees. Ah, how far back that all seems! I had planned to give up business, to be married, to fix up the old Monastery, to keep enough of it for a charming residence, to cover the rest with clematis and honeysuckle, to breed sheep, to turn peasant, to live among you. It was a dream. The Republic appeared to be established. But all has to be begun over again, and perhaps we shall die in the struggle. Well, go to bed now; you must be very tired."

"Where shall I sleep?"

"In a little room next the chamber that my mother occupies when she comes here. I have told Laurian. You have only one flight of stairs to climb."

"Laurian, who used to come with you to the Monastery? I have not seen him since I came here."

"He was out on an errand. He has come back. I have told him. No one else knows. He will be silent, — he never chatters. You can leave to-morrow morning, or if you are too tired you can stay in my mother's rooms. You might meet Pamphilion somewhere if you went out, and I know he is not friendly to you."

"I shall not leave to-morrow. You have not promised me enough. I want to speak with you again."

"I am not sure that I shall have the time I have had to-day. Besides, I can promise you nothing. You know very well I shall do all that man can do for the poor fellow."

"There! that is a good promise," I exclaimed, kissing his hand warmly.

He looked at me with an air of surprise.

"Do you know," he said, "that you used to be plain, and are now growing pretty?"

"Well, *mon Dieu!* what has that to do with it?"

"Just this, that in running about after all sorts of adventures you will be exposed to dangers that you cannot now foresee. Any how, *here* you are safe. I shall be at work nearly all night, and shall be afoot before day."

"Have you given up sleeping?"

"Who sleeps in France nowadays?"

"I do. I am going to sleep. You have given me hope."

"Don't have too much then, and be prudent."

"I will. May God be with you!"

I left him. I found Laurian in the passage. He was waiting for me, but he did not say one word, and did not even look at me. He went up the staircase, and I followed him. He gave me the light he carried and a key, and pointed to a door. Then he turned, and went downstairs without noise. Ah, it was rightly named The Reign of Terror! I had never seen it so near, — and I shuddered.

I was very tired, yet I felt angry that I was so completely overcome and so unable to keep awake a minute longer. "*Mon Dieu!*" I said as I dropped upon my bed, "is this all the strength I have? I thought I could accomplish the impossible, and I am knocked up by a little fatigue."

I fell asleep as I was consoling myself by saying, "Bah! things always are worst at the beginning. I shall grow accustomed to them by and by."

I slept without any consciousness of where I was, and when I woke at daybreak I had some trouble in remembering about myself. My first thought was to examine my feet. There were no blisters, and no swelling. I washed them, and put on shoes and stockings with great care. I remembered how I had once feared I should never be a good walker, because my cousin Jacques had laughed at the smallness of my hands and feet, and had said that I had a grasshopper's claws, and not feet fit for a woman. I had answered, —

"But grasshoppers are strong on their hind-legs, and can hop faster than you can run."

Mariotte had added, —

"She is right. People as spare as she is often walk as well as those who have beautiful big feet; the important thing is — are they sound?"

So I had sound feet, and was glad. I was rested. I was ready to walk all over France to help Emilien.

But he himself! How sick and sad he must be shut up in a prison! Had he food to eat, clothes to change, a bed to lie on? I dared not think about it. It would have weakened me. I lay in a little attic chamber with a window opening on the roof. I could not climb up to it. I saw nothing but the sky. I looked at the door by which I had got in, and, behold! it was locked on the outside. So I too was in prison! M. Costejoux was hiding me, but it was for my own good. I tried to be patient, and to wait for what might come.

XIII.

About six o'clock in the morning some one knocked at an inner door. I answered, "Come in!" and I saw Laurian making a sign to me. I followed him into a handsome room next to mine, which was the parlor of M. Costejoux's mother. He showed me a good breakfast laid out on the table, and then pointed to the windows closed by venetian blinds, by which I understood that I might look out, but must not open them. After this he went off as he had done the night before, locking me in, and carrying the key with him.

When I had eaten enough I looked into the street. It was the first town I had ever seen, and this was its fashionable quarter. But the Monastery was handsomer and better built. I thought all the houses small, dull, and gloomy, — and they were dismal. They were citizens' houses, the owners of which were all in the country. No one was left but a few servants, who crept forth as if they were in hiding, and went back without speaking to any one in the street. Domiciliary visits were going on. I saw a mob of men in liberty-caps, with big cockades, go into one of the handsomest of these houses, open the shutters, and walk about as they pleased. Their voices reached me. They seemed to be ordering and threatening. I heard doors broken open and furniture destroyed. An old woman who had been left in charge grew angry, and I heard loud reproaches in a cracked voice. They

made more noise than she did, and they carried her off to prison. Then they brought out boxes, coffers, and piles of papers. The people in the shops laughed stupidly and apprehensively; wayfarers asked no questions, and did not stop to look. Fear had made every one stupid and supine.

I understood it all, and was filled with indignation. I asked myself how it was that M. Costejoux, who must behold these things, did not attempt to put an end to such barbarities, to insults offered to a woman with white hairs, who was but trying to defend her master's property against mere robbers. And the owners, — why were they not there? Why did the whole town suffer itself to be pillaged and invaded by a mere handful of evil-doers? I saw them carry off linen and plate. I saw them kill a poor dog who tried to defend his master's property. Had old people and dogs all the courage that was left in that town?

I was very indignant when I next saw M. Costejoux, who about noon came up into the room where I was. I could not refrain from telling him what I had seen.

"Yes," he replied, "it it all horrible and unjust. We are a nation debased to brutishness, which avenges itself accordingly."

"No, no!" I cried, "it is not we, — not the people; it is not the nation! The people are frightened, cowardly; that is their worst crime."

"Well, yes, — there you touch the sore spot. The people are cowardly; and therefore we cannot count upon the people to prevent the aristocracy from betraying us to the enemy. We can find nothing but scum to help on the good cause. We have to take what we can get."

"That is most unfortunate. You flutter round and round like a bird when a cat is in its cage; if you break

out, there is a hawk ready to devour you; if you stay in, the cat will eat you."

"Very likely, — and this people for whom we labor, for whom we make every sacrifice, looks on, and gives us no assistance. You are right. They are cowards; and what is more, they are all for self. See how you peasants flung yourselves with rapture on the lands given you by the Revolution; and now you have to be requisitioned at the sword's point to get you to go to the defence of your own country."

"It is your own fault, — you have shocked us too deeply. Just see what has happened to Emilien. He hastened here to be a soldier, and you flung him into prison. Do you suppose such things hold out much encouragement to patriotism? Come! tell me what they are going to do with him, for you must know."

"He is to be sent to Chateauroux; I obtained that much this morning. It is a great gain."

"Then I shall go to Chateauroux."

"Do as you like. I think you are undertaking the impossible."

"You should not say such things to one whose mind is made up."

"Well, try if you will. Risk your life for his, — it is your will and your destiny. Only do not forget one thing, — if you fail and are discovered, you will send him to his death; you will have destroyed what little chance there is that he may get off with imprisonment. Good-by. I must not stop longer. Here are two things that you will need, — a passport, or rather a certificate of *civisme*, and some money."

"Thanks for the certificate, but I have all the money that I want. When do they remove Emilien?"

"To-morrow morning. I am sending off three prisoners because the prisons here are full. I have had him named as one of them."

M. Costejoux quitted me abruptly, for he heard some one ringing at his door. I did not see him again. I spent the rest of the day studying a map of the country, which I found in Madame Costejoux's room, and which I engraved upon my memory as thoroughly as if I had traced it. At nightfall I said to Laurian, when he brought me my supper, that I wanted to go back to Valcreux, and that he would oblige me by leaving the lower door open. I promised him to get out without anybody's seeing me. I watched for the right moment, and I kept my word. I came by night and I left by night, and the other servants never knew that I had passed a night and a day there.

I had made up my mind what to do. For me to stay in Limoges at the risk of meeting Pamphilion was to peril the departure of Emilien; but to go back to Valcreux would be to give up all news, and to lose all trace of him. I resolved to go to Chateauroux. I knew that there was a diligence to that place, and that it left early in the morning. I had listened to every word said in the kitchen the night before, and had made a note of everything. I left the town with my gray cloak over my head and my bundle under my cloak, and I walked on aimlessly until I saw a solitary woman sitting on her doorstep. I asked her the way to Paris. She pointed out the road plainly enough. I was some way from it, but I soon found it. Every one in the vicinity had gone to bed; nothing seemed to be abroad. There I intended to wait. But what time would the diligence pass? Along that road too, probably, would come the very vehicle that held the prisoners. I saw a large church open. It was dark, without even the little

lamp that usually is burning before the altar. I thought I would go into it, as it seemed empty. I slipped in in the dark, and tumbled against some steps. I fell down, and was much astonished to find myself on grass. How came it there? The church was not in ruins. I heard whispers, and some one stepping about as if by stealth, as if other persons were concealed there. It frightened me; I slipped out silently. I had slept well the night before, and did not stand in need of rest. I walked along the high-road to a wood, where I sat down and waited for the dawn, dropping off to sleep sometimes for want of anything else to occupy me, but taking care never to sleep soundly, so greatly did I dread missing the expected conveyance.

At last I heard the trot of several horses, and I ran to the edge of the wood to see what was coming. I saw a big cart, covered over like a carriage, escorted by three horsemen dressed in a sort of uniform, with swords and musquetoons. The ground was hilly, and they checked their speed. I felt by the beating of my heart that this must be the carriage and the escort of the prisoners. I had intended to let it pass if it came in advance of the diligence, but hope got the better of prudence. I went straight up to one of the horsemen, and asked him with feigned simplicity if that was the stage for Chateauroux?

"What a fool you must be!" he said; "can't you see that this is the carriage of the aristocrats?"

I made believe I did not understand.

"Well, then," I asked, "if I paid, could n't I get leave to ride in front of it, or behind?"

And I added, taking hold of his horse's nose, "If I had not stopped you, your beast would have lost his curb."

I fastened it while the carriage went on; and so remained alone a moment with the horseman.

"Where are you going?" he said.

"I am going out to service in a village where I have never been before. Let me get up on your coach?"

"You are not bad looking. Do you mind being told so?"

"No, indeed!" I said with simulated impudence, which was all the better for a sort of innocence behind.

The man spurred his horse, and rode on to tell the driver of the carriage to stop. He exchanged a few words with him, made me mount up on the board which served for a seat in front, and I heard him say to the other horsemen, —

"'T is a requisition!"

The others laughed, and I shuddered.

"No matter," I thought; "here I am travelling with Emilien. I shall know where they take him, how they treat him; and if these men insult me, I shall have to take flight in some favorable spot."

The driver was a fat man with a grayish beard, a red face, and a kindly air. He was glad enough to talk. In less than an hour I had found ont that he was the conductor of the diligence, but that he had been requisitioned to take the prisoners, and that it was Baptiste his nephew, the head stable-boy, who was to drive the diligence that day. He did not know the prisoners' names, nor did he care.

"Republic, monarchy, white, red, or tricolor," he said, "are all the same to me. I don't understand the difference. I know about my horses, and I know the taverns where the wine is good, — nobody need ask me about anything else. When government orders me, I obey. I consider that whoever is strongest, or whoever pays best, is right in everything."

I made believe that I agreed with his philosophy, and he went on talking about lots of things that had no interest for me; but I listened anyhow, and laid up in my memory all sorts of details about the country and its inhabitants. Among other things he told me about the part of the world he came from. He was from Berry, from a little place called Crévant, of which I had never heard.

"Ah, *dame!*" he said, "it is a very wild country, and there are plenty of people living on the moors who I am sure have never seen a town, a high-road, or a four-wheeled vehicle. It is all chestnuts and ferns, and you can go a mile without seeing even a goat. *Ma foi!* if I had stayed at home I should have been more at peace than I am here. They don't care about the Republic where I come from; half of them don't know even that there is a Republic. But they are terribly poor, — they don't spend anything, because they never make any money."

I asked him where this desert was. He gave me a sort of route, which I engraved in my memory, all the time looking as if I only paid attention from politeness, and indeed without knowing what good it would do me to know such things; but I was on the *qui vive* about everything, and said to myself that one never knew how anything might come into use.

He told me too that the men who escorted us were no gendarmes, but patriots of Limoges, who volunteered on such services to make themselves conspicuous. Another example of ferocity, the child of fear!

I had to quit them at Bessines, where they stopped to change horses. I had done my best to see the prisoners or at least to hear their voices. They were so well shut up that, without compromising myself, I could ascertain nothing about them. Notwithstanding my prudence,

found out that the horsemen either mistrusted me or feared to be blamed on my account; for they told me that they could keep me no longer, and that as the diligence would soon come up I had better stay where I was. I waited for it an hour. It changed horses too. I was dying of impatience, fearing to lose sight of the prisoners. I went up to the conductor. I called him "Citizen Baptiste," and told him that his uncle had instructed me to ask him for a place upon the box beside him, which he gave me without difficulty. I wanted to be able to talk to somebody. I was glad when the diligence was off again.

And yet I was terribly anxious about what might happen when I reached the end of my journey. The way men looked at me and spoke to me was new to me, and I began to perceive the inconvenience of being a lone girl travelling about the country. At Valcreux everybody knew me to be modest and well-behaved; no man had ever shown me that he felt I was no longer a child, and I never made much account of my own age. I began to think about what M. Costejoux had said to me on that subject.

I saw in my sex an obstacle to my purpose, and difficulties that I had never dreamed of. Fear roused my modesty. At any other time it might have pleased me to find out that people called me pretty, but now it threw me into despair. Beauty attracts attention, and I wished I could be invisible.

I turned over several projects in my head. I decided not to show myself at Chateauroux until I was under some protection, and to go back for that protection to Valcreux as soon as I was certain that Emilien was in the convoy.

I say "convoy," because another covered cart suddenly turned out of a by-road and attempted to pass us.

"Ah," said Baptiste the driver, "there 's another lot of

evil beasts from the lower country going to join the rest of them. It seems that the prisons are all full. They are great fools in our parts to bother themselves so much with aristocrats when they might just as well get rid of them as they did at Nantes or Lyons."

"How was that?" I said.

"They shot them down in squads, or they drowned them like dogs."

"Quite right," I answered, bewildered and beside myself, and speaking the first words that came into my mind.

Thus too I was a coward; but I was not afraid for myself, — for I really believe if I had not thought of the work before me I should have flown in the speaker's face, and boxed his ears.

I made out by what he said that we should not rejoin the convoy, and that it would go on all night while we stopped at Argenton.

"All night!" I thought. "Ah, if I had stayed with the first carriage I might have taken advantage of some chance, some accident —"

With that came a wild wish to jump down and to run. I hardly knew what I wished. My head was beginning to turn. I had made so many plans, I was worn out. Nothing practicable came into my mind.

I lifted up my heart to God. When we reached Argenton it was night-fall; what was my surprise and joy to see the convoy at the inn-door! It was waiting for post-horses that had not come back, and two of the mounted escort had gone off to see if any could be requisitioned. It was said there was not a horse left in the town. I looked at the two remaining horsemen. The one who had called me a "requisition" was not there. But the others recognized me. There was one very suspicious one, who

asked me if I knew any prisoner in the convoy. It was not a very cunning question; but I grew distrustful in my turn, and answered boldly that a person like me never knew aristocrats.

I then went into the inn that I might not seem to be examining the convoy. Presently the two horsemen came in, bringing an old man whom I had not before seen, an old woman whom I recognized as the servant I had seen arrested that morning, and a young man whom I dared not look at for fear my eyes would betray me. But I did not need to look: it was he, — it was Emilien! I turned and gazed into the fire that he might not observe me. I heard that they were giving him supper with the rest. I don't know what they ate; they said nothing. When I felt that I could trust myself, I turned round and looked at him when nobody was noticing. He was very pale, and seemed tired. One would have supposed he was travelling on business. I plucked up courage; and as he might have started had he seen me, I left the inn, resolved to sleep in the open air rather than in that place full of rude men, who looked at me with low coarse jokes and laughter.

I left the high-road, and walked a long distance that night. Harvest was over. There were plenty of ricks to sleep under and to hide in. Being alone I was afraid no longer. Having resolved to get home to make preparations for my enterprise, I turned into a cross-road by early dawn, and went eastward in as straight a line as I could towards Baunat and Chénerailles. I made no blunders. I had seen on the map that on a bee-line the Monastery was half-way between Limoges and Argenton. I reached home without accident the next evening.

XIV.

I RELATED all my adventures to the Prior, and I begged him to keep very quiet, to allow himself to be forgotten, to "play dead" as M. Costejoux had told me. I begged him to let all the place be laid waste rather than make enemies for himself. He laughed at me, saying he feared no man, and meant to do his duty by his landlord so long as the breath was in his body. He was always preaching prudence to others, and he was prudent himself when he was constrained to talk about politics; but otherwise he was rash naturally, and was never afraid to turn pilferers out of his domain as boldly as he did when he was steward of the Community. It was his nature, — and it saved him from many annoyances. Peasants despise those who fear them, and always give in (at least in theory) to rightful claims.

After making many plans, I decided on the one I had half formed during my journey. I asked Dumont, who knew the roads and villages, if he would risk the journey with me; and he reproached me for having attempted anything without him. He approved my project. He went to the neighboring town, where he bought a donkey and some cloth, out of which, by working at night, I made myself a suit of boy's clothes. I put up some linen, some articles for sale, and several things I needed, some things for Dumont and a good many for Emilien, who I knew must be destitute of everything. We had but little money.

The Prior, who it may be remembered had some of his own, opened his purse, from which I took less than he wanted me to. Very miserly in small things, he was very generous in great ones.

While I was making my preparations, Dumont, guided by my directions, went unknown to any one to examine that neighborhood of Crévant which had remained fixed in my mind as the best hiding-place within our reach; for our task would not be over when we had set the prisoner at liberty, — they might search for him, denounce him, and recapture him. A desert alone would hide him from pursuit, and nothing wild enough was to be found around us. Besides, Pamphilion knew our hills too well.

Dumont came back and told me that the spot I had sent him to was the best possible place to lie concealed in, and that he had secured a fit place for Emilien by hiring, for a mere trifle, a lonely building in an out of the way situation. It was not very far from our own home, — say ten or twelve hours' march. We must not calculate, he said with a sigh, on eating bread and drinking wine there, but with industry we could be safe from famine. A week after my return I set forth again by night, dressed like a boy, with my hair cropped and with a staff in my hand. Dumont had not for some time trimmed his hair and beard. He gave no indication of having once been a servant in a nobleman's family. He was very sharp, very prudent, very brave, and for some months past he had never relapsed into his old fault, but had been perfectly sober. Before us marched our ass, carrying our packages wrapped in straw. He was not so much loaded but that one or the other of us might mount him in case of need or accident.

We baited at Châtelus, and after a day's journey of thirty miles we passed the night at Châtre, a little town of

three thousand inhabitants, where, thank Heaven! the Terror made more noise than it did harm. A few democrats had made a stir, but the inhabitants, fearful of one another, did not persecute their neighbors.

I remarked to Dumont that they were hospitable, and seemed less fierce than people in other places. As we came along he showed me the high range of country in which we were intending to find refuge; and it did seem to me as if Berry must be farther off from the Revolution than Limoges and Argenton, which were on the road to Paris.

In point of fact, of what we call a road there was none between Châtre and Chateauroux. Travellers followed the course of the Indre by pretty shaded lanes, which in winter must have been impassable, and at last they found themselves on a wide moor, where cross-roads intersected each other in all directions. We came near getting lost upon this moor. However, at last we reached Chateauroux in a perfectly flat country, where being once more on the Paris road we were again to find ourselves in the midst of mutual distrust and general agitation.

Dumont had acquaintances everywhere, but he was known as a good patriot. He also had his certificate of *civisme* in his pocket. As for me, six miles from the Monastery I was as little known as if I had come from America. I passed for his nephew. He called me Luke.

He set to work at once to hire a room, and making believe that all those he saw in better places were too dear for him, he finally got one close to the prison. It was a wretched little place, but we were glad to find a lodging where we wanted one. There was but one room, but they consented to let us hire besides a little loft, which we said we wanted for our business of making straw-mats

cet-work; there I established myself safe from
ce and observation.
ext morning Dumont, who approved of my wish
n as little as possible, went out and bought what
ed, and we set to work. He was the son of a
aker, and had not forgotten his trade. I learned
, and we soon made enough baskets to sell, for
obliged to have something to do to explain our
n the town. Dumont found there men he knew,
ing seen him formerly well paid and well clothed
rvice of the Marquis de Franqueville were rather
d to find him reduced to basket-work; but they
t he had always been inclined to drink, and prob-
posed that he had drunk up all his savings. He
scruple of saying before them all kinds of harm
is old employers. Nobody suspected he could
be interested in a member of that family; and as
- Luke — I was not supposed to have ever known

udence upon this point did not prove as neces-
ve had at first supposed it would be. The people
ened to see did not know the names of the pris-
no for some days past had been brought there
er places, and took no interest in them. Chateau-
a little town more *bourgeois* and moderate than
nary or royalist. The vinedressers who mostly
the faubourgs were republicans, but not dema-
and were generally not disposed to cruelty. The
Terror therefore was but poorly kept up in this
ce, and M. Costejoux had chosen it well as a spot
milien would not probably be exposed to popular

; this, we thought it best to wait for peace, never

supposing, simple as we were, that peace would not come until France should be crushed to the earth in 1815. We thought we could rely on victories near at hand to bring back confidence and justice, and did not like to compromise the life of our dear prisoner by any imprudent effort to deliver him. But I earnestly wished he could know, to soothe his solitude, that we were near, and thinking only of his deliverance in case of danger.

I soon found means to let him know this. The prison (since destroyed) was an old fortified gateway called *la porte aux guédons*. It was composed of two big towers joined by a sort of donjon, with a passage between them, whose portcullis was no longer lowered, for the street had been built up beyond. In the lower stories of the towers lived the jailers and turnkeys, and above were the prisoners, in two large circular rooms, with very small windows. One of the outside platforms was their place for exercise, and our house was built up close to this tower, which was not very high, its battlements being ruined in many places. From the loft where I slept I could not see the platform, but a neighboring garret where the jailer — for the house was his — stored his fruits and vegetables was very near the platform, and one could see any one walking there, or even speak to them. I slipped into this place by getting out the screws of the lock. I saw what could be done; then I put everything back again, and asked Dumont to get leave for me to work in this lighter loft, mine being too dark and too small. Permission was soon given. Dumont was great friends with our jailer and landlord. They drank wine together in the mornings, and Dumont almost always paid the score.

He boasted of the honesty and sobriety of Luke, a sensible good lad, he said, who would not touch an apple or a

ea-pod. So a bargain was made, and twenty cents a nonth added to our other rent settled everything. They gave me the key of the storeroom, and I carried thither ll my osiers and my tools; I was even trusted to look after the provisions, and I made war on the mice with such success that the jailer and his family were charmed with me.

For a fortnight, indeed, after we got there I was not quite certain if Emilien was in this or in some other prison: there were two in the town, — the great gateway of the château, and a donjon in the park. We dared not ask many questions. As soon as I was at liberty to go into the loft at any time of the day, I ascertained the customs of the prison, and found that I could see the prisoners taking exercise upon the platform morning and evening. There were about a dozen of them, and they were only allowed to go up there two at a time. Emilien came up with the old gentleman I had seen with him at the inn at Argenton. They looked as composed as they had seemed then, and were talking as they walked round and round the platform. Emilien even stopped to look at me, as I drew near the loophole of my loft holding a basket half made, and making believe to watch the swallows. I was quite near enough for him to recognize me; but he did not, because of my disguise, my occupation, and my cropped hair. He suspected nothing.

I wished he had been alone; but why should I mistrust his companion in captivity? Besides, might I not count on Emilien's having the necessary prudence? I began to sing, as I twisted my osiers, a song of our own hills, which he loved. I saw him start, come close to the breach, and look at me attentively. I gave him a rapid nod, as if to tell him "It is I." He put both hands to his mouth,

and held them there as if to give them a long kiss, which he sent me quickly, turning away as he did so, that I might not send one back to him. He was afraid some one would suspect me.

Dumont was much relieved to find that Emilien knew of our presence; but in the mean time he had got a piece of bad news. The commissioner sent by the Convention into this district, who had been a good and just man (I think his name was Michaud), had just been superseded by Commissioner Lejeune, who had the reputation of being a terrible man, and the spirit of the population was quite changed. The prisoners were now to be tried.

I will not dwell upon my anguish, — I will go on quickly to the end. Two young noblemen — brothers — named Chéry de Bigut were the most deeply compromised. They had been denounced as having opposed the departure of recruits. It was proposed that they should be sent to Paris for trial; but Citizen Lejeune was very angry.

"Don't you know the new law?" he cried. "Prisoners are to be tried and executed in the place where they have committed their crimes."

So he ordered the trial, which was not long nor complicated. In a few days these poor fellows, who had excited no sedition, were condemned on the testimony of two witnesses, and executed at the place called St. Catherine's, almost under our very eyes, near the *porte aux guédons*. While this dreadful affair lasted I could neither eat nor drink. I had hoped that having neither gendarmes nor executioner in the town the condemned would obtain a respite. But they sent a volunteer horseman to Issoudun to requisition a provost-marshal, and the guillotine was put up close to our house. I took refuge in my garret, whence I could not see the street; but presently I saw on the roof of

both towers a number of prisoners. They were those of the *porte aux guédons* and of all the other prisons of the town, who were brought there to be present at the execution. There were many more than I had supposed. They were nearly all monks and nuns, the men upon one tower, the women on the other. As they had their keepers with them I did not show myself, but through a crack in the shutter of my loophole I looked for Emilien. He came forward firmly, and placed himself at the edge of the parapet; crossed his arms, and looked at the preparations for the execution without flinching. He gave a slight start when the heads fell, and I heard in the midst of the crowd which had gathered in profound silence round the scaffold the shrill shrieks of women who had lost their self-control. The prisoners were then taken away. I trembled till my teeth chattered. I would not go out of the house that day or the next, for fear of seeing the guillotine and the blood upon the paving-stones.

This fear made me so weak and ill that I blamed myself, and resolved to get over it. Was I not liable myself to die by such a death, since I was planning how to save a victim? And if I failed, what was there but the scaffold for both of us? Well, one must risk everything to win, and yet should feel as Emilien did, — prepared for whatever might happen.

I saw him the next morning, and he made me a sign to look at a pigeon which was flying from the tower to the roof of our house. It was one of the jailer's pigeons, and these birds often went to the tower to eat bits of bread with which the prisoners amused themselves by feeding them. I very often had had thoughts of intrusting one of them with a letter, but I dared not. I now guessed what Emilien had done. I ran and caught the pretty

brown-and-white pigeon as it went back to its nest, and I read on a bit of linen cloth written in pencil, —

"For Heaven's sake return home! I need nothing. I am resigned. Your danger alone disquiets me."

"Since he is uncomfortable about us," I said to Dumont, "do not let us show ourselves to him. He will fancy we have gone home; but let us act. They will go on to kill all the prisoners."

"That is not certain yet," he replied. "Some have been set at liberty. Do not let us lose heart, but be ready for anything. Now let me tell you, my little Luke, that I have followed your advice, and succeeded. I have acted my part so well that Père Mouton (the jailer) has taken a great fancy to me, and to-morrow I am to begin to help him in the prison."

"How is that possible?"

"You may not know it, but Père Mouton is no more a jailer than you or I. He is quite new to his duties, because now that all the prisons are so crowded they have had to increase their force. The guards are neither soldiers nor *employés* of the prison. They are men of the town who have sent their sons to the war, and are rewarded by being made guards, with the pay of two francs a day, — a charge paid by such of the prisoners as have property in the neighborhood. You see the place is sought after; but they are all working-men, — they understand nothing about their duties, and are too lazy to care about them. Mouton and his wife have sole charge of the prisoners, sweep for them, cook for them, and look after them. He would much prefer to pass his time drinking with the guards, and he complains that the work is too great for him. I have offered to take the heavy work off his hands; and as I did

not want to seem anxious for it, I haggled about the price he is to pay me. He will take a trifle off our rent, and we are to do work in the prison. I say *we*, for I have got you in too. I said that you were a simple fellow, who would help me, and pay no attention to the prisoners. Only they want your certificate of *civisme*, and it is made out in the name of Nanette Surgeon. Could not you get up one with the name of Luke Dumont?"

"I have already thought of that," I said. "And here it is."

I had passed several evenings imitating the handwriting of M. Costejoux so successfully that it would have been hard to detect the difference. Such certificates were half the time written on plain paper. Mine seemed to be all right. Père Mouton took it, looked at it upside down, and gave it back to me. He could not read. That gave me the notion of getting up one for Emilien in case of need; and in order not to compromise M. Costejoux, I signed it *Pamphilion*. I got that idea from finding a bit of the writing of our *cidevant* monk on a piece of paper I had picked up in the Monastery, in which I had wrapped up some of my things. His signature was on it. I copied it faithfully, and without any scruple of conscience whatever.

XV.

At first I did not often go into the prison, and when I did I played the part of a very awkward, timid lad. I soon saw that Mouton regretted I was not more useful to him. I grew bolder; I acquired his confidence; I got admitted to the room that contained Emilien. It was a bare garret with two pallets and two stools. He was there with the old gentleman I have spoken of. Two other straw beds were vacant. They had belonged to the two hapless young men who had been put to death a few days before.

When Emilien saw me come in he hesitated a moment, but as I flung my arms about his neck he could not restrain himself, and with sobs held me tightly pressed some minutes to his bosom.

"This is my guardian angel," he said to the old gentleman, — "my friend from childhood, my sister before God. She comes to save me. She will not succeed; but —"

"I *shall* succeed!" I cried. "The hardest part is over. I shall bring you a rope, and you must let yourself down on the roof of my garret. Dumont will help us. Do not think of sending us away. We are resolved to die with you if need be, and therefore we can risk everything."

"And my poor sister, and our other friends, and Costejoux, and the Prior, — they will pay for our escape?"

"No, — nobody at Valcreux will betray your sister. The Prior has taken the oath. Mariotte promised me to

hide them if they were molested, and many other faithful friends will help her. Costejoux wants you to escape, for he has furnished me the means of helping you. He knows that you are innocent; he loves you still."

The old man left us to talk together, and said nothing; he even looked as if he did not hear. I asked Emilien by a glance if he had entire confidence in him. He answered in a whisper, —

"I can trust him like my God. Ah, if you could save him too!"

"Do not think of it," said the old man, who heard us all the time; "I do not wish to be saved." Then turning to me, he went on: "I am a priest, and I have refused to take the oath. I was examined yesterday; I would not tell a lie, though those who examined me were friendly, and wanted to have spared me. I answered that I was tired of concealment and dissimulation. I have had enough of life; I would have killed myself before now but for reverence for my religion. The guillotine will do it for me. I have not shrunk from my duty; I am ready to appear before my God. But I entreat you, who are young, and who are even in sympathy with the Revolution," he added, turning to Emilien, "to make an effort to escape. It seems to me possible, almost easy. The hardest part will be to find a hiding-place."

"I have provided one," I said. "I know we shall be tracked like wild beasts, and that we can trust no one, so terribly have fear and anger changed the hearts of men. We will go into a desert place; and if you think you have strength to slip down the rope —"

"No, no, — not me!" he said. "I have neither strength to do it nor the will to try. I must have been sentenced by this time. I am glad of it. Don't speak to

me of flight. I will pray for you." And he knelt down, turning his back on us.

Emilien still tried to make me give up my project; but when he found me so determined to risk myself or to die with him he gave in, and promised to do as I directed him, — only as there was no intention announced as yet of bringing him again before his judges, he made me promise in my turn that I would do nothing unless his trial at Limoges was set aside at Chateauroux.

The next day — it was I think the 10th of August, 1793 — they made a great fête in the town, and as I wished to bring home some news I went to see what it was all about. I could not understand the meaning of what I saw. An open carriage strangely decorated was driven through the streets, followed by five or six women bearing flags. These were mothers who had sons in the army as volunteers. They were escorting the Goddess of Liberty, represented by a stout, handsome woman in a classical costume. She was the daughter of a shoemaker whose name was Marquis, so they called her *la grande marquise.* The procession followed her car to the church of the Barefooted Friars, where what I saw explained what had surprised me in the church in Limoges. She mounted a little mound of turf, which had been built in the former chancel, and which represented, it was said, the Mountain. At the top of this mound sat a man with a long beard, who represented — some said Time, others the Eternal Father. He was a journeyman cobbler, whose name I have forgotten. At the foot of the Mountain was a half-naked boy representing Infant Love. There was a discourse made, and they sang something or other. I watched this foolish exhibition as if I had been in a dream, and I fancy nobody knew any more about it than I did. These Republican fêtes were

matters of pure fancy. The Council of the Commune took into consideration any programme brought before it by the *Sociétes populaires*, and the people put their own interpretations upon what was given them.

On leaving the Temple, as the church was now called, I saw a very significant scene. The *marquise* when about to reascend her car noticed among the spectators a tradesman of the town who was suspected of royalism. She called him by his name, which I have now forgotten, and said insolently, —

"Come here! I want you to step upon!"

He was afraid to disobey; he drew near and knelt before her. She put her foot upon his neck and sprang lightly into her car.

It seemed to me that the world had gone mad, and after having sold a few baskets I went back to Emilien. I told him what I had seen when I carried him his dinner, — to which I added on the sly something a little better than prison fare. The old priest would not touch it, notwithstanding my entreaties. He was so weak that I wanted to get him a little wine.

"I need no strength," he said; "what you have just told us makes me glad to die."

A short time after this farce came an atrocious tragedy. The poor priest went to his death with admirable tranquillity. His scaffold was raised upon the public promenade. This time I determined to conquer my horror and to see the frightful guillotine. Besides, I felt it my duty to follow our poor friend and to catch his eye if I could, that he might perceive by a gleam in mine my earnest respect and affection. But he must have feared to compromise those who pitied him, — there were many besides me, — for he looked at nobody. Some Spanish prisoners were

present at his execution. I saw them pull flowers from under their white coats and throw them at him. Then I closed my eyes; I heard the axe fall; I seemed paralyzed; it was as if my own head had been cut off, — and I said to myself, —

"Perhaps to-morrow I shall hear the axe fall upon the neck of Emilien!"

Dumont pulled me by the arm and led me away. I hardly felt that I was walking. I knew not where I was.

When I was able to go to Emilien I found him alone and overwhelmed with grief. He had formed a strong attachment for the priest. I comforted him and took comfort myself in grieving with him; then as I could not restrain my indignation, it was he who calmed me.

"Let us not curse the Republic," he said, "rather let us weep for her. These ferocities, these injustices, are blows dealt at her heart. They are killing *her* when they murder the innocent, and demoralize the people, who are becoming unable to comprehend her."

"And now," I said, "you must escape, — escape to-night. You see that your turn will come probably to-morrow, and when you are sentenced they will watch you so closely that I shall not be able to do anything."

"No," he replied, "I must wait."

As we were disputing about this I heard steps mounting the staircase, and I ran to the door with my broom and basket in my hand, as if I had just finished my sweeping; but I found myself in presence of M. Costejoux, and came near uttering a cry of joy. The jailer was with him. M. Costejoux sent him away without apparently recognizing me, and then said, —

"Go, get me writing materials. I wish to interrogate this prisoner myself."

I obeyed him with all haste, and when I came back he said, —

"Shut the door, and let us talk in whispers. I have just seen the Commissioner Lejeune, and as he was about to examine Emilien and to try him over again, being from the district of Limoges, I — what will you think? — I reclaimed him in the name of Pamphilion, who is eager for his prey! I have undertaken to carry him back to Limoges, and am empowered to do so. We are to leave this very evening. It is no use hiding from you that Pamphilion has more influence than I; so that Emilien must make his escape upon the journey. It will not be very difficult, but where can he go? Where will he be in safety? I don't know."

"But I do," I cried.

"Well, then, do not tell me, and trust in the help of God. Can you be on the road to Argenton about twelve miles from here about eleven o'clock to-night?"

"Certainly."

"Well, look out for a place they call Les Taupins. Dumont will know it. It is the only hamlet in the midst of a vast moor. I shall be in a post-chaise. I shall have an escort of two men; but they are friends, and I can trust them. The prisoner must escape at that spot. They will see nothing, and will not find out that he is gone till we are almost at Limoges, — that is to say, not until you are far enough off to be in safety. Make ready. Here is money, take it; you do not know how long you may be in hiding, and without money one is lost."

We all three embraced one another with emotion. Emilien asked M. Costejoux to look after his sister, and he promised to take care of her. I ran and told Dumont to load the ass. We had no reason to mention to Mouton that

we should not come back; we had paid for our lodgings in advance. We made no secret however of our departure. Dumont said that he had got a letter from his brother urging him to come home to attend to some pressing business, and it was understood that we were going to Vatan for a few days. We left some of our things behind us, to show that we intended to return.

When we were out in the country, under the friendly shades of night, and with joy in our hearts, both of us began to cry. But soon Dumont breaking silence, and speaking in a whisper, began to express to me feelings that touched me much, though I would rather have gone on fast in silence, and not have had my heart stirred, that I might keep all my presence of mind.

"Nanon," he said, "God helps us, — I am sure of it; but He does it for thy sake. Thou hast such a brave heart; thou art bold as a man. As for me, I am not good for anything. I have deserved hanging a thousand times over. When I think that instead of laying money by so as to have a little income to leave my poor boy [he was speaking of Emilien], I have behaved like a brute beast, and have drunk it all up, — yes, all! — then I feel like that priest; I am disgusted with life. Never speak to me again if you ever see me tipsy."

"You need not be afraid," I said. "You have got over that fault. It was a kind of sickness, and your own goodness has brought you through. You have been put to the test; for to win the confidence of our jailer you have often had to drink with him, and you have watched over yourself so well that you have sometimes made him drunk without ever having lost your own head."

"Ah, that was hard, indeed! Yes, I never did anything so hard in my life; I never supposed I could have

done it. But that does not make up for the past; whatever I do I am safe to be damned, — yes, Nanon, damned like a dog!"

"But why do you fancy dogs are damned?" I answered, laughing. "They never do any harm. Don't take such ideas into your head, but let us get on, Père Dumont. M. Costejoux's carriage will travel faster than we can walk, and we must be at the rendezvous by eleven."

"Yes, yes," he replied, "let us walk fast. But we can talk all the same; I can open my mind to you. Why should n't an honest man open his heart? See here, am I saying anything foolish? I have been a drunkard, and I ought to be punished. I was warned, for I fell thirty feet once over a bank; and when I got to the bottom — plumb down at the very bottom you know — just like that very place —"

And he wanted to stop and show me for the hundredth time just how he had fallen one night when he came near killing himself as he came home drunk to the Monastery.

"Come on," I said; "are you going to stop me just to tell me what I know?"

"Stop you? Ah, yes! now you are going to tell me — you too — that I don't know what I am about. Every body despises me! I deserve it! I despise myself! Poor thing! it is a hard case that you should be travelling with a poor wretch like me, a beggar! — for I am a poor beggar, whatever you say about it. If I only had a little more courage I should have killed myself already. A dog indeed! See here! Leave me, — you will have to give me up, — let me tumble into that ditch. I know what I am about. I am not drunk this time, — it is trouble! Into a ditch! — a ditch is good enough for me. Let me alone! I 'd like to die there —"

There was no room to doubt now. The poor man who so long had held out against temptation had been wrecked in sight of port. He had been overcome at his last parting with Mouton. He was drunk now!

In any other circumstances I should have known what to do. But at this moment, working as we were for the deliverance of our friend; having to keep ahead of the carriage, to be ready to turn aside suspicion, to go forward without attracting attention, to manage our flight at the right moment, and to observe everything without showing any feeling, — I found myself with a man upon my hands whose drunkenness had taken the form of despair; for he felt he was no longer able to help me, and he broke into bitter self-reproaches, repeating continually, "I am not drunk, — it 's all trouble! I am damned; there 's nothing for me but to die!" He wanted to lie down and to go to sleep. He wept; he began to talk loud. Very soon he did not know me. I feared that he might become violent.

I pulled him by the arm, I pushed him, I held him up, I dragged him along until I was exhausted. When I could do no more I was obliged to let him sit down on the side of the road with his feet in the ditch. I could not get him to ride the ass; he said it was the guillotine, and he had rather kill himself.

I thought of leaving him, for every moment I fancied I heard the wheels of the carriage that was bringing on Emilien. The blood surged in my ears. I had used up so much of my strength in dragging along Dumont, that I feared I should not have enough left to go much farther. If he had been inclined to sleep I would have put him where he would not be seen by wayfarers, and would have gone on by myself, hoping to find without him the spot he had secured for our hiding-place. But his idea was sui-

cide, and I had to coax and scold him like a baby. A vehicle came by, — but it was not M. Costejoux's carriage; it was a cart. I took a desperate step. I went straight up to the driver and stopped him. He was a carrier going back to Argenton. I showed him the old man lying on the ground, and, telling him of my difficulty, implored him to take him up into his cart, and to carry him on to the next tavern. He refused at first, thinking that it was an attack of epilepsy; but when he saw that it was only, as he said, an *accident that might happen to anybody*, he was very kind, laughed at my anxiety, picked up Dumont like a child, and put him into his vehicle. Then he took his seat on the shaft, and told me to come on with my ass. In a few minutes Dumont calmed down and fell asleep. The carrier put a little hay over him, and in order to keep himself awake he began to whistle over and over again a bit of a song-tune; it was slow and monotonous. Probably it was the only one he knew, and he only knew part of it. He began it again and again, and never got to the end of the air. I was relieved, though I was still very nervous. His singing worried me. When it ended after about an hour, things were worse than ever. The carrier had gone to sleep, and the horses missing the whip went on so slowly that the ass and I could hardly move tardily enough for them. At last I saw a house. I woke the carrier, and I begged him to help me to get my uncle down upon a pile of cut heather lying by the roadside. He did it very good-naturedly, and I thanked him. I dared not offer him money. I know not whether he would have refused it or no, but he would have been surprised, for at that time the smallest coin was a rarity in the pockets of such as we were.

While he went on I tried to make the people of the house

hear me. But I knocked in vain. Then I made up my mind. I perceived that Dumont was sleeping soundly on the heather, and I knew that no harm could come to him there. I urged the ass forward, and made him go twice as fast as before. I soon passed the carrier, who had gone to sleep again, and never knew that I had left *my uncle* behind.

By this time I was on the great moor that I had been told of. As well as I could calculate I had not gone much more than three miles, nor could I tell how much time I had lost in trying to make Dumont come on. I could have known what time it was by the stars, but the sky was covered by thick clouds; a storm was coming up, and low thunder began to growl. Puffs of wind from time to time raised clouds of dust, which made it still more difficult to see before me. I said to myself that a light in the distance would show me the hamlet of the Taupins; but if this light should be obscured by clouds of dust, I might pass beyond it. From time to time I stopped to look behind me, and then I went on faster, fearing equally to go too fast or to go too slow. All of a sudden, in the midst of thunder rolling loud and long, I heard the noise of a carriage coming up fast behind me. Was I far from the post-house? Would it pass me? I did not take time to jump upon my ass, I began to run so fast that he could hardly keep up with me. When the carriage was very near I turned into a ditch. It passed us like a flash, and I saw two horsemen escorting it. I kept on running, but in less than a minute nothing was left behind but dust and darkness. A minute more and the noise of the wheels died away, and I found myself distanced, — horribly, frightfully alone upon the moor!

Then all that human strength could do I required of my

limbs; I ran on without caring where I was going. Deaf to the rattle of the thunder which seemed to me to be rolling after the carriage, and indifferent to the lightning that I was attracting by my wild rush through a current of air, I hastened madly onward. Perhaps I might have caught up with the carriage had not fire suddenly enveloped me. I saw a bright ball flash down to earth ten yards before me. It dazzled me, it blinded me; the shock flung me back on my poor ass, who fell, and I fell with him.

We were neither of us struck by lightning, but we were stunned. He did not stir. I did not rise; I had lost all perception. Had a carriage passed then it would have run over us. I never knew if I lay there a minute or a quarter of an hour. When I came to myself I was sitting upon the heath. The ass was grazing quietly. It was raining in torrents. Some one was whispering in my ear, and sheltering me in his arms to keep me from the rain. Was I dead? Was it a vision?

"Emilien!" I cried.

"Yes, it is I. Silence!" he said. "Can you walk? Let us hasten from this place."

I got back my presence of mind. I rose; I signed to the ass, who was so well trained that he would follow me like a dog.

Amidst gusts of wind and rain we marched an hour over the moorland. At last we got into the Forest of Chateauroux, and felt ourselves safe.

Here we took breath, and without speaking held each other for some time in a long embrace. Then Emilien, hearing something crackle under his feet, stooped down, touched the earth, and said in a low voice, —

"This is a place where they burn charcoal."

We were on one of those great heaps of cinders covered

with earth where smolder the fires that make charcoal. The wood was not burning, but the ground was warm, and we could lie down upon it and dry ourselves, for the rain had stopped. We did not talk, fearing to attract the attention of any charcoal-burners whose cabins might be near at hand. As for gamekeepers, they were all gone; any man who pleased might trespass and pillage in the forests of the State. We held each other's hands in silence. We were so happy that perhaps we should not have found words to speak had we been in safety. After half an hour of unbroken repose we crossed the forest, followed by three wolves, whose eyes shone like red sparks behind us. We took care not to let them get near the ass, whom they would have attacked but for our presence.

We went on, somewhat guided by chance, for we did not know the forest. We only knew that there was an old Roman road in it running southeast, but we had no stars to guide us. At last the clouds cleared away, and we saw through the trees the Belt of Orion, which peasants call the "Three Kings." Soon after this we found the Roman road. It was easily recognizable by the deep grooves in its stones. It led us to the edge of the wood, where the three wolves relieved us of their company.

XVI.

I HAD got over my fatigue, and we found ourselves af-
ır we quitted the forest on a moor, less difficult to cross
ıan the former one. We went on easily; rain had not
ıllen there, the ground was dry, and we at least were sure
f being alone in the open. The sky covered with stars
ɜemed very vast as it hung over this uncultivated tract;
ɔr even the better portions of the land had never been
nder the plough for want of laborers. Nothing was culti-
ated at any distance from any dwelling; all the men had
one to the wars. The Republic had said: "Let us in-
erest ourselves in nothing but the war: let the young
ıen fight; let the women spin cloth and sew uniforms;
et the children and the aged scrape lint for the wounded
ır weave crowns for the conquerors." Danton had added:
'*Let all business be suspended!*" It was all very well
ɔr Danton to say that to the Parisians. The poor of
'aris were fed at the city's expense; they were even paid
ɔr their presence in the assemblies of the Sections. But
ıe peasant! — to him suspension of labor meant uncul-
vated fields, dead flocks, and children without bread.
'eople who lived in towns did not realize all this, and
ɜemed astonished when we of the country grew anxious
r discouraged.

The general misery favored the flight of Emilien. The
ountry was deserted. The heather and the broom grow-
ng together in large tufts made spots where one could

sleep more safely than in a citadel. The only voice heard was that of the partridge calling to her young, or sometimes the low, plaintive notes of night-birds chirping to one another from tree to tree. These poor trees, sparse and miserable, showed here and there their pollard heads, and might have been taken for sentinels but that our eyes were too sharp for such a blunder.

At last we could talk without dread of being overheard, and without having to struggle against the difficulties and uncertainties of our way. I was confident that we were walking in the right direction.

I asked Emilien how it happened that running after him as I had done, I had suddenly found myself beside the road with him. He said that M. Costejoux, thinking there might be too many persons round the post-house at the Taupins, had made him get down a short distance before reaching it. M. Costejoux had profited by the confusion among the escort, owing to the storm, to tell Emilien to slip into a ditch and to stay hidden until I came up, promising at the rendezvous where he expected to find me to tell me where he was. Neither the postilion nor the horsemen found out his escape, and we hoped night would be over before they had the least suspicion. Emilien had hidden himself at first, but soon he recognized my footsteps and my voice, for it seems I was crying aloud in my grief without being aware of it. Of course I was beside myself as I ran, crazed by the tempest and my own anxiety. I was saying, "My God! my God! Is even God against us?"

Emilien had followed me, not daring to call me by my name, running as fast as he could after me. He could not come up to me till just as I fell after the great thunder-clap. He picked me up, knowing I was not dead, for I kept on saying, "My God! my God! is this Thy will?"

But he feared that I was either crazed or blinded, for I could not walk and did not know where I was.

"Ah, my poor dear Nanon," he said, "what a fright I had! For a moment I was sorry I had come out of prison. I cursed myself for having accepted a deliverance that had cost thee so dear. Tell me now where is Dumont, and how did it happen that I found thee alone? Is he somewhere waiting for us?"

I was obliged to tell him what had taken place, and it caused him grave anxiety.

"What will happen to our poor friend?" he said. "When he wakes he will start out in search of us. He will go on to the Taupins; he will ask questions, he will rouse suspicions; he will compromise himself, he will possibly be arrested —"

"Never fear!" I said. "Dumont is very prudent, never more so than the day after a fit of drunkenness. He dreads to have his lapse perceived, and does not care to talk much even to his friends. He will be sure we are on our way to Crévant, where he has found us a hiding-place, and he will come on after us."

"Crévant!" he cried; "is it there we are to hide ourselves?"

"Yes, our arrangements are all made, and I know the road we are to follow. Dumont explained it to me, and I saw it on the map."

"But don't you know that Millard who denounced my two unfortunate fellow-prisoners, the brothers Bigut, is Mayor of Crévant?"

I was greatly frightened, and was very nearly giving up the refuge I had prepared; but when we both talked it over we held to our first purpose. Millard was either a wicked man, whose motive was personal vengeance, or

some fool of a patriot who had not expected to send two victims to the scaffold. In the first case he would have no reason, as he did not know us, to persecute us; in the second, he must have repented, and would not do it again. Besides, he might be sick or absent. We resolved however to avoid the town and to find our way across the country, provided the house hired by Dumont should prove too much exposed to danger.

But where should we find Dumont?

We resolved to rest till dawn upon the highest ground of the plateau in the brushwood, whence, without being ourselves seen, we could see all over the country.

I was terribly fatigued, and slept very soundly. The rising sun awoke me by shining in my eyes. I rose, I looked around me; Emilien had disappeared. I was alone with the ass, whose saddle and load had been my bed.

I was very much frightened.

"He must have gone back after Dumont," I said; "he will be retaken."

I looked round me on all sides, but could see no one. I reloaded the ass, not knowing what I did, without asking myself what I was going to do. I looked again, and in the distance saw two men on the road that we had passed over in the night. How anxious I was till I was able to distinguish them! At last I could see them plainly. It was Emilien bringing along poor Dumont, still terribly weak. He was leaning on the arm of Emilien, who seemed to hurry him.

We set out again immediately. Dumont did not say a word; Emilien made me a sign to let him come to himself by degrees. We did not need his help to know how to travel straight towards our destination, without detours or doublings. Besides a study of the district that I had made upon the map, we people of La Marche have a

special instinct about travelling as a bird flies. Not long ago our parties of working-men always went across country to Paris, or to any large towns, where they found employment in squads as masons. Before railroads, they might be met in large or small parties scattered over the whole country; and as they always made short cuts through the fields, farmers complained much of them.

During the Reign of Terror there were no such travellers, and we found ourselves alone in the wilderness. We followed a little stream called the Gourdon, but without going down into the ravine it flows through, where there were several mills and cottages. We left it in the Forest of Villemost to cross the ford at Bordesoule; then having passed the turning that leads to Aigurande, we bore to our left, and after a day's march of twenty-three or twenty-four miles we reached at last, without passing through Crévant, the wild country we were in search of.

Nothing could have been better for our purpose. It was an oasis of granite and greenness, a labyrinth in which all was adapted to concealment and mystery. Everywhere there were great round bowlders cropping up out of the soil, or mounting one upon another as if they had been giant pebbles. The roads were deep lanes along which the narrowest carts could hardly have passed, or horse-paths still narrower, where nothing that had wheels could go. These led into sandy places, crossed by running streams which one could easily wade through. Everywhere there was splendid vegetation. Mighty chestnut-trees grew upon all the hills, and in the hollows there were thick bushes, wild pear-trees covered with fruit, and honeysuckles in full flower; there were holly and juniper bushes as big as trees, with running roots which made a kind of bridge over the moist sands, or lay along them looking like great snakes in the road.

"Why," cried Emilien, "do not all the persecuted in France come and hide themselves in similar places? There is not a spot here as big as my hand where one is not under cover, and in three strides one could always find a hiding-place. Here it would need thousands of searchers to find one fugitive."

Dumont, finding we were so well pleased with our retreat, took heart again.

"The country is too poor," he said, "for those accustomed to comforts to live in many days. Even you may find it somewhat hard, frugal and inured to privation as you are, if we have to pass the winter here. We will do the best we can to fix things comfortably. But it would be no use talking to rich people from the towns about living in the hollow of a ravine with nobody to speak to. They would go mad, and would rather give themselves up than live so."

He said the truth. Those were times in which some men preferred death to lingering misery, — like the poor priest I had seen so ready to die because he was weary of hiding himself.

As for us, happy to be together again, full of strength and youth, proud of having carried out our plan, accustomed to live on very little, and to see rocks and woods all round us, — we thought we had got into paradise; and could we have forgotten the griefs and dangers of others, it would have been to us a very Eden.

I had separated from my companions on the journey to go and buy a little oil in a village, some salt, some bread, a few cooking utensils, and some plates and dishes. We did not bother ourselves about our evening meal on our arrival, but it proved delicious. Around the chestnuts grew enormous vines, and under the brushwood were edible fungi, yellow as amber, peeping fresh and clean above the moss.

In our part of the country we know all about fungi; they are a kind of food that the inhabitants of Berry have never utilized, and have let go to waste. Even now they do not know the kinds that are poisonous from the wholesome, and accidents sometimes occur. We found all we could eat, and no one came to share our harvest. In those times, even before the *levée en masse* which carried off men from every homestead, this corner of the world was neither cultivated nor inhabited. The land must have had owners, recent proprietors like ourselves, who expected to make something out of it; but they only visited it about chestnut time, — those valuable trees needing no cultivation of any kind.

After a long day's march we reached the place where we were to find a home. We crossed a little stream which murmured as it rippled over immense stones of granite, round as rolls, and big as houses. There was neither bridge nor plank to cross upon; we had to jump from one bowlder to another. We climbed up a little rocky cliff, and found ourselves in a beautiful natural garden, with green turf, flowers, and shrubs. It was a spot from which for very many years granite had been taken for places not rich in stones; and the earth, broken up and manured by the animals employed, had become covered with beautiful plants. But the transportation of granite had come to an end, since churches and castles were no longer erected. The difficulty of carriage was too great for little purses; besides, here as everywhere else there were no workmen. Dumont had seen the last one when preparing to leave, and he had hired his cabin, — for a rent of ten francs a year.

"It is nothing to boast of," he said, making his way under the trees that shaded a sloping roof, "but it is solid, pretty big, and well concealed. We will fix it up. I have

hired all the ground around it for twenty francs, and we have the right to take anything we need for building."

The hut had been in truth nothing but a sleeping-place for quarry-men; but its walls would have stood a siege. They were formed of blocks grooved so as to present a surface almost smooth in the interior. The roof was composed of one long block of stone fearful to look at, but so admirably balanced that it could not fall; and as it was too near to the ground for any one to stand upright under it, the floor had been cut down lower into the sand. The place was very clean and wholesome, only needing gutters to be kept open to prevent rain-water from settling there.

"Just see," cried Emilien, after examining the massive building with astonishment, "it is impossible our quarry-men could have placed such blocks as these are here. They found our cabin made. It is what the Prior would call a *dolmen*, and what we call a fairies' threshing-floor." [1]

He was right. In spite of grooves cut recently, and bits of masonry added to fill up chinks between the stones, it was a Druid monument; and looking round us we saw several others, some broken up to be carried away, and some that had not been meddled with.

It was easy enough with a few branches interlaced with heather to make myself a little sleeping-room, cut off from the main chamber; and Emilien wanted to set to work at once, while Dumont, with wet clay and the thick moss which grew along the banks of the stream, caulked up some holes in the building. I occupied myself about the furniture. It was easy enough to take its inventory, — an old iron tripod to cook on in the open air, a big water-jar, a great bowl, a dozen shelves ill planed, and a few tree-roots cut smooth upon one side, which served for stools.

[1] Among the peasantry of Western France, the *aire*, or threshing-floor, is the ball-room on festive occasions.

Of bed and bedding there was none, — no table, no closets, no fireplace. I had nothing to do but to plan how I might make the most of these poor things, while I prepared supper. We spent our first night in the open air, as we had done so many others; but the air was cold, it being near the end of summer. The next day we set to work. The first thing was to make sure that the door was safe, for there were plenty of tracks of wolves on the sand around our dwelling. Dumont and Emilien repaired the window-shutter, which was loose. They made a partition, that I might have my bedroom to myself; and they left a great opening between two rocks to serve me for a window, which I stopped up at night by a bundle of grass and fern. We had brought from Chateauroux, on the ass, the tools needed for carpentry. With some planks they made three bunks, which they filled with some fine river-moss we had discovered, and which dried in the sun made excellent beds, which could be renewed easily. I had brought three of those great white blouses which keep the clothes clean when one is obliged to sleep in them. Since I began to wear boy's clothes I had grown strong and active in boy's work. While the men made the bigger furniture, the table and the beds, I made wooden spoons and forks, some wooden bowls, and a salt-box; I also made with some wire a gridiron to cook mushrooms on. I appropriated a shelf, and set out upon it all my cups and dishes. I had everything I wanted to mend and sew with, besides soap, brushes, combs, and a dozen napkins. I had been particular to bring everything relating to cleanliness, — for my only dread of poverty had always been its association with dirt. I was expert in resources of this kind. I had early served my apprenticeship under the eye of my great-uncle, who was very particular. He never would let us sit down to table without clean faces and hands.

Dumont and Emilien also built a very good stable for the ass. He had superseded Rosette in my affections, for though my life had grown tragic I was still very much of a child, or rather I went naturally back to childish things as soon as I could. He was an excellent ass, very intelligent, very strong, and willing to work, notwithstanding his small size and his meek air. He was trained to follow like a dog, and I could not stir a step without his being at my heels, ready to play with me, or to work for me if I wanted him. He was of great use in bringing wood and clay for our constructions; for clay was the hardest thing to get, and we were obliged to go to some distance from our sand and rocks to find it in the ditches.

Notwithstanding all we had brought besides our provisions, we needed many things; but we had all that was strictly necessary at first, and we managed to get ourselves housed in about a week without having seen a single person.

This would not now be possible, though the spot is still very wild, little built upon, and thinly populated. But roads have been cut, uncultivated lands have been broken up, many rocks have been uprooted, and in the district there are some pretty little farms. In '93, when the old *régime* was at an end, in which the peasant had nothing, and the great proprietor — almost always an absentee — scarcely knew the situation of his own land, we lived in this place in the midst of general anarchy and depopulation much like Robinson Crusoe on his island. Like him, the first time we saw the print of a footstep on the river's bank we looked into each other's faces, and the same thought came to Emilien and myself. We had read Robinson Crusoe together, with delight. We had dreamed of a desert island for ourselves alone; we had found something very like it, — but savages were nearer to us than they had been to him.

XVII.

And yet the footstep was only that of a child; but the child might have been sent as a spy. It did not see us, however; nor was it seen. The next day came two children. This time we saw them, though at a distance. They seemed afraid of us. We thought it best to call to them, that we might not seem to be anxious to hide. They ran away, however, and did not come back any more. Had they gone to inform against us?

"Do not let us think so," said Emilien; "lest before long we begin to hate our fellow-creatures, and all cannot deserve our hatred. We have known many who are good; the Reign of Terror cannot have destroyed them all, and I prefer to think that the good are still in the majority. See! in my own case the wicked have been the exception. For one Pamphilion, who could not forgive me for the liberation of the Prior; for one Lejeune, who has the madness to believe that the more things you destroy the more things will grow, — I have had friends like Costejoux, the Prior, and Dumont, not counting the many who, though they could not help, gave me their good wishes or their prayers; and those, I am sure, are nearly all the inhabitants of Valcreux."

"And I," I said, — "don't you count me among them?"

"No," he replied; "I never count you with the rest. You! you are above all, — more than all. I never have even thanked you; and I hope you understand why."

"Well, — not exactly."

"Ah, because you do not know! True, you have no notion what you are to me! You fancy yourself my servant, the future servant of my wife and of my children. I remember, — we agreed on that, you know."

And he began to laugh, while he covered my hand with kisses, as if I had been his mother. I could not help telling him so.

"Yes," he replied, "be my mother; I am willing. For if I had had a mother, I believe I should have loved nothing else so well on earth. Accept the respect, the tenderness, the adoration I would have given my mother."

Then he put my hand through his arm and we went on, walking quietly under the wild plum-trees. I was gathering plums to make wine for the winter, for Emilien had made a vat and a barrel, and we knew how to prepare our humble beverage. That day he talked to me no more except about our domestic affairs, and to say truth he rarely spoke of his regard for me, and then only in a few words; but what he said seemed so well said and so determined, that I never doubted that he cared for me.

Our childish visitors never came back. We were more than six miles from Crévant; and in other directions cottages were so few and far between that our nearest neighbors were a great way off. When peasants have nothing to go after, they rarely explore their neighborhood. Even now in the most populous parts of Berry there are families who know nothing about the lay of the land three miles from their own houses, and who at the distance of a mile and a half could not tell you your way. But such ignorance grows rarer, and people tied down to the small spot of earth on which they live are, I must say, nowadays always the very poor.

Well knowing that even had we wanted it we could get no assistance, we made arrangements to live like anchorites. Years after, we knew that in the early days of Christianity there had been hermits living among rocks where we now lived, and tradition said that our own fairy habitation, — called in the neighborhood the *trou aux fades*, or brownies' hole, — after having been occupied by *femmes sauvages* (or Druidesses), had been a hermitage. We said then that if Christian solitaries had been able to live in this Thebaïd when the land was wilder and the population even scantier than in our own time, we could well contrive to pass one winter there.

So we spared no pains to make ourselves as much at home as possible, — partly from prudence; for if anybody came to see us, we felt it desirable not to look like those who had come thither for concealment, and who cared not how things might look for a time, but we wished to appear poor folks trying to live as comfortably as possible, — to make a living, and to settle there.

The rest of the summer and up to the time of frost mushrooms were our principal subsistence. Dumont went fearlessly about the country. From time to time he took the ass and travelled considerable distances, — first to one farm, then to another, to get salt, barley meal, buckwheat, oil, and even fruits and vegetables. Things were very dear, for a sort of famine reigned in the land; and when he offered baskets in exchange, people said: "What is the good of baskets when there is nothing to put in them?" We had money, but we were forced to seem as poor as the rest, and to bargain with an obstinacy of which Emilien and I might not have been capable. Dumont played his part so well that he was thought one of the poorest peasants in that part of the country; and several times farmers'

wives had the charity to offer him a glass of wine, — a rare and precious thing in those parts, for Berry is not a wine-growing country. But Dumont had taken a solemn oath not to drink, even a drop. He had been so mortified at having been near betraying his dear Emilien, that he put this penance on himself, and mortified his desires like a real hermit.

There came at last a scarcity of grain, when meat was easier to get than flour. We did not need any. Game abounded, and we invented all kinds of snares, nets, traps, and nooses. Few days passed without our catching a hare, a partridge, a rabbit, or some little birds. There were plenty of gudgeons and other fish in the stream, and I soon made some nets. A little marsh gave us frogs, which we by no means despised. We caught some foxes, which was hard to manage; but we were more cunning than they, and we dried their skins for bed-covers. After a while Dumont managed to get two goats, whose milk made us quite comfortable, and who cost us nothing for food, any more than the ass. There was plenty of grass around us, and pasture-lands unused on tracts that were not yet sold.

When the time came to gather chestnuts, our subsistence was all safe. We had no longer any need to make purchases. We had a dozen magnificent trees, and we managed to store the fruit in a pit in the sand. Being natives of La Marche, we knew how to manage this precious food better than the people of Berry.

But the time of the chestnut harvest exposed us to an invasion of visitors, and we thought it best to take precautions. Neither Dumont nor I, who passed for his nephew, had reason to fear anything; but Emilien, — poor Emilien, — whose warmest wish was to serve France as a soldier,

ıd himself a skulker against his will. He either had ıide entirely, or to pretend to be lame. He resigned self to this, and made himself a wooden leg, which he ened to his bent knee, and used a crutch. To our ıt surprise, this proved an unnecessary precaution. found persons gathering chestnuts all around us; but of the fifteen or twenty who climbed the cliffs none sed the stream, none came near our house, none spoke s, no one seemed even to look at us.

/e thought this very strange; but Emilien and I con- ed that the good peasants guessed how it was, and did choose to see us, in order to be able to swear, in case ieed, that they knew nothing about us.

his really was the motive of a few; but we had a sub- ıent explanation of the conduct of the others.

was midnight, Christmas Eve. The comfort and rity we enjoyed, the perfect ignorance we lived in as vhat was going on in the world, the hope of safely ing through this strait and going back to common again, had given us good spirits, and we determined to Christmas. We had built, with some blocks of gran- hipped off from what had been last quarried, a good ıney, so that we could burn our Yule log; with dry ots around it the log made plenty of light. We set our e, and I served a string of fat larks, a pile of my finest tnuts cooked in different ways, and a cheese of goat's . As a substitute for a Christmas tree, Emilien had and fixed upon the table a little holly-bush covered red berries peeping out among its glossy leaves. plum wine was as clear as spring-water, and as sharp inegar. We people of the mountain love its acid. ıont (no better being to be had) did not despise it; when I had demonstrated to him that it was not *real*

wine, he consented to drink to the health of our absent friends. Alas! fears could not but creep over us that they might be all imprisoned or guillotined, — even Costejoux, for having saved us; but each of us pressed his hand upon his heart to keep it still, and no one would tell the others about his secret tremor. Dumont, who had been out of spirits a long time, troubled by remorse and deprived of excitement, shook off his gloom. He knew that we both loved him dearly, and that he was forgiven. He therefore began to sing in a cracked voice a song that was probably somewhat too jovial; for on Emilien's saying one word to him, he stopped short and turned it into a Christmas Carol.

He had reached the middle of the second verse, when a long, strange, hoarse cry, which astonished us, rose near the house, and died away in the neighborhood of the Parelle, — the biggest Druid's stone in our neighborhood.[1]

We listened attentively. We were accustomed to wolves and foxes, and were sure that it was no cry of theirs. It was apparently a human voice. Dumont seized a stick, and opened the door softly. Then we heard words that we could not understand, which evidently came from an old woman wild with wrath and fear. We tried to catch the phantom, for we saw her flitting over the dry heather; but we lost her in the darkness.

"What will you bet," said Dumont, "that it is not a witch come at the hour when midnight Mass used to be sung, to perform some witch's rite on the big stone?"

"You are probably correct," said Emilien. "I dare say ideas here are like those in our own village. People

[1] I have since learned that *Par-ell* is Celtic for the Big Stone of Fire, the High Altar of the Druids.

believe no doubt that the Druid stones are haunted, and that the spirits come out of their graves and dance about at midnight, laying bare the treasures buried under these stones. The old woman doubtless came here to invoke the Devil. You drove her off by your holy hymn. I am glad of it. But sing no more, *Petit Père*, — there may be other free-thinking wizards around us, who might say that you are a priest in disguise engaged in saying Mass on Christmas Eve."

Next morning we found near our door an eel's skin stuck through with seven big nails. It was the proper offering to evil spirits, such as is well known in our part of the country. The witch had dropped it on hearing Dumont's canticle. He made a purse out of the eel's skin and used the nails; so the find was not unacceptable. A few days after, Dumont fell in with one of the last gang of quarry-men who had worked near the Parelle, and who had seen him hire the hut we lived in. He told him that our landlord had found work at Châtre, where he was to pull down the Carmelite Belfry.

"People are behind the rest of the world in these parts," he said. "Everything is getting pulled down now elsewhere. It will make work for us when they rebuild all they destroy. When that time arrives we shall come back and break up all your big stones."

"Even the Parelle?" asked Dumont, who wanted to find out what was thought of its virtues.

"Oh, no! — not that one!" said the quarry-man; "it is too big; besides it has got the Devil inside of it. You must have seen, if you have ever been able to climb on top of it, which I suppose is not easy for a man of your age," — Dumont always made himself out to be older and more infirm than he was, — "that it is all covered with

crosses and signs which the priests have had cut into it to chase away the bad spirits of former days? Well, believe me or not as you will, on Christmas Eve all these crosses disappear, and the stone is as smooth as my knee. They don't come back again till after dawn."

"Have you ever seen it?" said Dumont, without displaying incredulity.

"No, I have not," said the quarry-man. "I never watched there at the *bad hour* of the night; but my father, who never feared anything, saw just what I tell you."

"Then the wizards have it all their own way at the *bad hour?*"

"Since the Republic was proclaimed people have given up going there. The law forbids it, because they say it is very displeasing to our Good Lady of Reason, who is the same as the Blessed Virgin. But there are still some old women who come from a distance and hide, in hopes of finding the treasure under the stone that night; but, bah! they never will."

"Because it is not there?"

"Of course it is there; but the spirits watch over it, as you ought to know."

"*Ma foi*, no! Not wishing to intrude upon them, I never go near the Parelle."

"Well, you are quite right there, — it is a bad stone."

"Did you ever live near it?"

"Yes, indeed; I lived in the hut that they say you have turned into a good house. I have often passed the night with the old man who let it to you; but as I am a good Christian the brownies never troubled me. Won't Père Breuillet be pleased when you give him back his place so much improved! He might live there now summer and winter,

for they say you have built a chimney. He never cared to live there all the year because of the cold, — and sometimes the spirits molested him. But if you tell him there are none — damn it! you will be the only folks to think so, though; for nobody, even by daylight, likes to go past the spot. The place has a bad name from the bed of the stream to what they call the 'Wood of Bassoule;' and as there is another little stream on that side, it makes a space almost three miles square that they call the 'Brownies' Isle,' — the *Ile des Fades.*"

After having thus explained to Dumont the reason why our solitude was never invaded, the good man went on to question him about his own village, his two lads, and the lameness of the elder one. Dumont gave him answers such as we had arranged beforehand so as not to contradict one another in case of need; but he soon found out that we were in safe hands, for the quarry-man, without any distrust of a poor man like himself, said as he was going away, —

"It's a lucky thing for your poor lad that he got hurt as you say. I've got one, who is a splendid fellow; but for six months I have kept him in the house, making out that he is sick. He was engaged to be married to a girl, and now he can't even go to see her. But what could I do? When they had killed him for me by shot or by cold and hunger, who would work my bit of land?"

"Just so," replied Dumont. "But don't you fear the gendarmes?"

"What gendarmes? They don't have any now."

"Well, the volunteers then, who go about hunting those who shirk the conscription that they may find favor with the authorities?"

"Bah, bah! — they make believe to hunt, but they take

care not to find. Since M. Millard of Crévant got the poor brother Biguts' heads cut off people point at him as he goes along, and he fears the time when the royalists will avenge themselves. He is not as fierce as he used to be; he makes out that everything is going on well in our town, — that we are all good patriots; and so they let us alone."

"Then you don't think the Republic will last? Have you heard any news lately?"

"I went up to the Iron Works at Crozon a week or so ago. They told me there that they had put the Queen to death, and many others. You see yourself that such things cannot last, and that the *emigrés* will kill all the Jacobins."

"Well, yes, — so I suppose. But the invaders! — what may they not do to us poor innocent people? They will ravage and destroy us as wolves would harry a flock of sheep."

"Oh, then we 'll fight them! — we would defend our own homes of course."

Dumont had a great mind to tell him that it was better to hinder an army from coming than to fight it when it came, but he was prudent enough not to put any political opinion into circulation. He parted from the quarry-man, and came and told us the conversation.

The death of the Queen moved me more than all the other horrors of the Revolution.

"Why should they kill a woman?" I cried. "What harm can she have done them? Was it not her duty to obey her husband and to think as he did?"

Emilien answered that sometimes the husband obeyed his wife; "and when the woman sees most clearly," he said, "it is all right. I think he who marries *you* will do

right to take counsel with you about everything. But it has always been said that the Queen favored the invaders, or else wished to carry the King out of France. She has done her husband by this course great harm, and she has been the first cause of the excesses of the Revolution. I detest this cutting off of heads, and the penalty of death has always shocked me; but since the thing is still kept up in our age of enlightenment, I must say that the Queen deserved it more than many a poor servant-girl who has been beheaded for using some word whose meaning was hardly known to her. The Queen knew what she wanted, and knew what she was about. She has always been thought bold and courageous. No doubt she died bravely, saying to herself that it was the fate of leaders to stake their lives against the lives of the crowd; that she had lost, and that they had won."

XVIII.

We were glad to find our solitude was not likely to be invaded; but on hearing Dumont tell about the quarryman's son who was shirking the conscription, Emilien grew angry. He thought it was very wrong to refuse to serve in the army, and he said that his worst charge against the Reign of Terror was that it had hindered him from doing his duty.

"Then you are quite resolved," I said, "that when you can get away from this place without being arrested, you will start for the army?"

"Would you think much of me," he said, "if I acted otherwise?"

I could say nothing, — his mind was so clear and his heart was so right. I tried to accustom myself to the idea of seeing him go off to the wars without making the separation harder to him by my tears. I saw that he loved me better than anybody else, but I had not been brought up to think that any one should love me better than his duty.

Emilien and Dumont meantime, for their part, took but little rest. They were occupied in cultivating the small bit of land that we had hired; but it was so small and so sandy that they could not make much out of it, though they grew a few vegetables. Then Emilien took it into his head to break up a piece of moorland which was on the other side of the little stream, and which appeared to him

to be good soil. We did not know to whom it belonged; but as it produced absolutely nothing, and as it did not even serve for pasture, there being no inhabitants and consequently no cattle in the vicinity, he said, —

"I cannot think that if we cultivate this land we shall be guilty of misappropriation, or of robbery. I rather think that we shall be doing a good action. If we have a good harvest, as I expect we shall, and any one comes to look after it, we will settle with him, — if he be the owner of the land, — and will pay him his share. He will be satisfied, for he would otherwise have got nothing. If he never comes near us, we shall leave him his land in a state fit to be cultivated; and perhaps our first attempt may be the prelude to the improvement of this neglected part of the country."

His prophecy came more true than he anticipated. He and Dumont set to work. They pulled up the weeds, and labored diligently with their spades all the autumn; they made use of the manure we had saved from our goats and our ass; they dug drains; they broke up the great stones. They sowed rye, barley, and even a little wheat, — these grains, even for seed, had been hard to purchase, — and each kind was sown in what seemed the best place for it on this sloping moorland. They wanted to get some knowledge of the capabilities of the soil. By January everything had come up splendidly, and a beautiful green carpet gleamed bright as an emerald, surrounded by wild shrubs browned by the winter's frost.

This greenness being visible from afar, several persons ventured to come near and see what we were doing. The peasant who owned the spot, in some excitement, was among the first to come. When Dumont had assured him that he recognized his right to a share of the crop he

was satisfied, and the matter was easily settled. The peasant was well pleased, but he said, —

"I see the grain has come up, but God knows whether it will ripen."

"Do you think the climate is too cold?" said Dumont.

"No; but though I see the fairies have let you alone thus far, how can I tell if they will take a notion to let you go on to the end?"

"Oh, I don't care for the fairies; I can manage them," cried Dumont.

"Maybe so," said the good-man, looking askance at him. "If you know the right words, you may. But I don't know them, and I don't want to know them."

"Ho! then you take me, do you, for a wizard? And yet if the crop is a good one, as it promises to be, you will not decline to take your share?"

"Of course not; but I sha'n't put in another crop when you are gone."

He gazed a long time with surprise at his land in all its greenness, distrust and hope contending in his eyes. Then he walked reflectively away, like a man who has seen a prodigy.

So we found that we had the reputation of being on good terms with the fairies, and people about us shunned us more than ever. It was no longer we who had cause to be afraid; they were afraid of us. Emilien was somewhat troubled to think that we should have any hand in keeping up a superstition. But the end of it all was better than he anticipated. We heard subsequently that after our departure the peasants took courage and cultivated all the lands that bordered on the Fairy Island. These crops having prospered, they began to believe that the kind spirits who had protected us during our labors were now reconciled to mankind.

The winter was mild; our abode was so snugly repaired, and we were besides so well accustomed to take good care of one another, that we experienced no suffering. Our store of chestnuts, the milk of our goats, and the game we snared permitted us to do without flour; and small purchases of salt from time to time had enabled us to lay up a sufficient store of provisions. We needed nothing from without, and Dumont was not obliged to run any risks by making purchases at a distance. The last news that he had brought back with him was so distressing that we did not care for any more. Only we would have liked very much to know what was passing at the Monastery, and to relieve the anxiety of our friends, who possibly might believe that we had been arrested and put to death. But it would have been too great a risk to leave our asylum; and Emilien swore that if Dumont or I attempted to visit the Monastery to bring him news of his sister, he would come after us.

"You have forced me," he said, "to make you what men call *outlaws*, and as such you are liable to be guillotined. So there is no help for it. We must be saved together, or perish together, — whichever you will."

When spring came, the weather was so beautiful that hope sprang up in our hearts like flowers in the copse-wood. We had nothing to do except to watch the daily growth of our grain, and of the vegetables that we had planted round our cabin. I had looked over all our clothes and put them in good repair. Our linen was still sufficient. As we rose with the dawn, and went to bed by daylight, we needed no candles. We might have passed all our lives thus without feeling ourselves poor. Nor did we feel unhappy. Emilien and I were at an age when we could not believe in permanent misfortune, ruined lives, or the

impossibility of striving against circumstances. Dumont was no great reasoner. Emilien was his oracle; and I was every day more struck by the good sense that uprightness of heart and firmness of purpose gave to so young a man. Emilien was as simple as a child in all his habits, but he had a man's reasoning powers when he had to think or to decide. He said instinctively things that were so true that we fancied we had thought them at the same moment. Sometimes he seemed to guess what was happening in France and over the frontier; and afterward, when we recalled his words, we used to say that he must have been visited by the fairies in his dreams. In solitude our imaginations occasionally grew excited, and but for Emilien's cooler judgment Dumont and I might sometimes have been half out of our minds. The sight I had had of the guillotine had made a great impression upon me. One day I told Emilien that when I was alone I constantly seemed to hear the axe falling; and he said, —

"It is possible such an axe may be falling at the very moment when you hear it, and that, therefore, is a moment when you should lift your heart to God and say: 'Father, there is one soul less now living upon earth. If it were a good soul, let not its goodness be lost to us who remain. Let it bequeath to us its righteousness and its courage, that we may do the work that had it stayed on earth it would have done.' For, Nanette, don't you see that it is not one head more or less that will change the course of events. A useless murder reacts even on a good cause. The guillotine does more harm to those it spares than to those it kills. Ah, would that it did nothing more than kill men's bodies! But it also kills the sense of right and wrong. Men in power try to persuade the people that they are bound to sacrifice that part of the nation

it has proclaimed to be evil, to serve another part that it has pronounced good. Remember what the Prior told us when he said, 'This is the same principle as that of the Inquisition and of the Saint Bartholomew;' and so it will be in all revolutions as long as they adhere to the doctrine of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. That was the law of Moses. Christ said, 'Give thy cheek to the smiters; hold out thine arms to the cross.' We need a third revelation to reconcile the other two. To take revenge is to do evil; to yield without resistance is to authorize it. Some way must yet be found to repress without punishment, and to fight with weapons that do not wound. Do you shake your head, Nanon? Well, those weapons, it seems to me, have been found; it only remains that we should know how to use them. They are free speech, free discussion which will enlighten the minds of men, and public opinion which will make fratricidal plots innoxious; for wisdom and justice are at the bottom of the heart of every man, and good education will develop them, while ignorance and passion will stifle their germs. It is for us to seek for remedies, and to cherish hope. At the present time we know no means to attain our ends better than those of ancient barbarism, and we make use of them. The cause of the Revolution is holy in spite of what we see, for its aim is to give us better things. Probably Robespierre, Couthon, and St. Just dream of peace and fraternity, which they hope will come after all these human sacrifices. They err. Altars are not to be purified by bloody hands, and they and their followers will be accursed, because those who have admired them without reserve will imitate their ferocity without adopting their patriotism. But they will not carry with them the majority. The need of mutual tolerance and help will spring up ever fresh,

whatever happens, in the hearts of the people. The people would rather give up liberty than give up charity; and this feeling is often reviled as a mere love of peace. The Jacobins are at this moment all-powerful; you have seen how our people have even submitted to humor their religious fancies by ridiculous ceremonies. Well, there is nothing true or permanent in all their make-believe renovations. At this very moment I am certain that other parties in the state are undermining the power of these men, and that the people, revolted by their cruelty and that of their agents, are prepared to hail their downfall. There will be a reaction, probably, as bloody as the deeds that have produced it, and fresh cruelties will be committed in the name of humanity. Remember, that wrong begets wrong: we come back continually to that idea of the Prior. But when all is over, men will feel the necessity of coming to an understanding with one another, and of sacrificing their feverish theories to the voice of nature. Possibly at this very moment Robespierre may be destroying Danton and breaking up his party; but remember what I tell you, within a year we shall hear of the death of Robespierre. If we must wait, let us wait! Let us trust that the Republic may not fall with him. But if it should, we need not feel surprised. When it rises again, it will have to preach humanity above all things, and murder will have become a crime in all men's eyes."

When I asked Emilien how, young as he was and always so much occupied with agricultural labor, he had been able to reflect so deeply upon things that he had only half seen, he answered, —

"I lived years during the days I spent in prison. At first I thought that I should die without ever having been able to understand anything that was passing round me,

and I gave up hope like a man who is falling off a roof with no chance to save himself; but when I found myself alone with that poor priest, whose name I never knew, whose name no one knew, and who was guillotined anonymously, light broke in upon me as I conversed with him. We did not think alike in many things; but he was so calm, so polished, so well-informed, and so good, that I could go down to the very depths of his heart, and could lay my own bare before him without any danger of destroying the affection that we had for each other. He gave me all his reasons for being a Catholic and a Royalist, and I had only to argue with him about things that we each believed in all sincerity. In these discussions my mind made great strides. Having no childish superstitions to attack in him, and no personal interests of his own to make allowance for, I saw real things clearly in my own mind. I found ideas there that I thought true. I saw them distinctly in spite of the storm that was beating on us both. I became calm, even as he was calm. I felt no anger against any man; I felt no surprise at anything. I hardly took much account of myself. I felt like a little dry leaf in a burning forest. I only regained an interest in myself when I saw you at that round window in the granary, and recognized your song. Then I remembered that I had once been happy, had once loved life; and I wept in secret for those dear lost years. I wept too for the loss of the future I had dreamed of with you."

"May we not still dream of it?" I asked.

"I do dream of such a future still. When I have served my country (always supposing that I come back from the wars), I will never again leave you."

"Never! — do you mean no more?"

"Never! — no more; and as you are all in all to

me, Nanette, I shall trust you with yourself during my absence."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you must keep up your courage and preserve your health, be hopeful and be happy, so that I may find you what I left you when I return. Ah, Nanon, you have spoiled me, and I cannot do without you! You have taught me to be happy, which is life's greatest boon. I had been brought up hardly to exist, to count for nothing in this world, to care for nothing, to wish for nothing; and you know how I had schooled myself to submission. But by your small remonstrances, your brief and just reflections, your wish to learn, your readiness to act, the steadiness of your will, and your absolute self-devotion, — a devotion without limit and without example, — you roused my soul from its sad, ignoble slumber. *Tiens!* in the very smallest things you roused in me the instincts of true manhood. You taught me the care that a man ought to take of his own body. I ran about the fields; I ate at irregular times like a brute beast; I only thought at intervals; I studied by snatches; I was perfectly indifferent to the dirt and the irregular habits of the monks; I was harsh to myself, but only from laziness. You gave me ideas of order, regularity, and steadiness of purpose. You taught me to finish what I had once begun, and to begin nothing that I would not finish. And thus I learned that what one loves once one ought to love all one's life long. In this strange savage existence we lead here, you have made us a home that is very sweet; you have made us comfortable beyond what I could have imagined possible; and the pains you take to do it, makes it a duty for us to profit by your cares and to enjoy them. Sometimes I laugh at you for taking so much pains; more often I am deeply moved by your deli-

cate contrivances to hide our [illegible]. I admire you. You are not a machine, but a [illegible] enterprising, cultivated and [illegible] thing. If it sometimes seems as if I [illegible] matter of course, Nanon, [illegible] the extent of your self-[illegible] ming fountain, whose [illegible] merit is my gratitude. [illegible] the only reward you [illegible] act and feel so as to [illegible] even as you are, and [illegible] when you want to know what I think of you, I need only look into your own soul."

While Emilien was [illegible] under the great [illegible] tected with their [illegible] young grass studded with spring flowers. Emilien knew many of these plants. He had studied a little botany with the Prior: and knowing that [illegible] brought him his [illegible] He taught me all he knew of them in a short time, and our Fairy Island was [illegible] every opportunity of improving ourselves. We delighted to know fully how beautiful [illegible] of things can [illegible] ination and communion [illegible] country, which it [illegible] pleased me. [illegible] perhaps [illegible] the happiness we felt in all living [illegible] one another [illegible]

XIX.

One morning, feeling more confident than usual, and not able to deny ourselves the pleasure of an exploring expedition, Emilien and I climbed up to a spot which from the course of the streams around us seemed to be the highest land in Berry, as well as the boundary of our own La Marche. There were no longer any great granite rocks peeping above the ground. The land abounded in green hillocks; and from one of the highest of these, crowned with numerous trees, we saw around us a vast stretch of open country. What struck us most was its want of variety; it was everywhere alike. If there were cottages in the distance, we did not see them; they were hidden by trees or in densely-wooded gorges. We could hardly catch a glimpse of the numerous little streams which furrowed and crossed the country; they were hidden by shrubs and brushwood along their banks. The soil was cut up into innumerable little vales, which uniting formed a great valley surrounded by rounded hillocks such as the one on which we stood; these stretched away till they seemed almost to touch the sky, and one could hardly say if the landscape were bounded by forest or by mountain. Towards the horizon, in the foreground, behind us, and beside us it was the same thing, — a beautiful green uncultivated desert; with immense trees, fresh grass, pink heather, purple fox-gloves, flowering broom, great pines below and chestnut-trees above; an horizon blue

from its proximity to the earth's greenness, and dark from being so intensely blue. Birds sang; but there was no sound of human life, nor could we see the smoke of any human habitation.

"Don't you feel," said Emilien, "that this is a marvellous country? In our poor part of the world, which is naturally so barren, the moment we find a little valley with any promise of fertility, or a spot where there are no rocks above the surface, you may always see a cabin, a cow-house, a wretched little orchard with its fruit-trees gnarled and distorted by the wind; but here there is good soil, — deep, light, black, and one can see it is fertile, because it supports such a quantity of trees (chestnut-trees three thousand years old, possibly more, for you know that the stem of an old chestnut-tree never dies unless struck by lightning, or some other accident), — and yet this spot seems unknown to all the rest of the world. We have been living here six months, and have held friendly intercourse with nobody. Nothing seems to have been built here; there are not even any roads to be traced on the landscape which here stretches before our eyes. What does this prove, Nanon? Have you thought about it, — you who when wandering after your goats must have seen how grand and beautiful our own wilderness is?"

"Yes," I said; "I have thought about it, and I have said to myself that the men who live here have not the industry and courage which poverty gives to our own peasantry. People in Berry are too well off. Their trees supply them with chestnuts, which they live upon half the year; their great stretches of pasture-land, where grass never fails under the shade of the trees, insures them always milk; the waste-lands swarm with game. They live as we live in our Fairy Island, except that they are savages and

have no ideas. I even believe they are afraid of being better off, like that goodman who was scared when he saw your wheat coming up on his bit of moorland."

"You suggest the real reason," said Emilien; "they are afraid of spirits. I could wager they are still Celts, though they do not know it; for their religion to this very day does not prevent their fearing the gods of ancient Gaul. See! since the days of those divinities the country has not changed. These very trees concealed the haunts of the ancient priestesses of the Druids. This carpet of green grass has sprung up wild for centuries, during which man has never dared to stick a spade into it nor to set up his own landmarks. The land having so long been held in common, now belongs practically to no one. Probably no man dares to own it, or if he does, he dares not make use of it; he does not live here; he trembles if he sets foot upon it. Nanette, do you know where we now stand? We are in Celtic Gaul. Nothing has been changed; we see it just as it ever was; nothing is wanting but the Druids. And viewed in this light, it seems to me that this old country is more grand and more beautiful than anything that we can see elsewhere. Does it seem so to you?"

"Yes," I answered; "since spring came it seems very beautiful, and I shall feel sorry to leave it. Even in winter when I first came here I felt its beauty when I saw the trees, then leafless, and their great trunks covered with knots and bosses, with ivy and moss hanging down from their boughs. They frightened me at first; and yet I said to myself, "I have never seen anything so grand; here one can feel that Nature is far above man."

Such was our talk as we walked together in this solitude. I set down our ideas rather than our words. I can express

myself, doubtless, better now than I probably expressed myself then; but I say frankly that many grand ideas passed through my mind while we lived in that almost unbroken solitude, while a tempest raged around us which ripened rapidly those in its track, however simple they might have been before. In those days generals of twenty did wonders. No doubt there were philosophers who reasoned sagaciously, like Emilien, and who were but twenty-one; or girls of eighteen, like me, who understood all that they were privileged to hear.

We walked home that day through the Wood of Bassoule, and as we were in the mood for admiring, we were struck by the strangeness of this wood. It was traversed by a pretty brook whose course was arrested in some low ground, where it formed a marsh full of wild-flowers. The soil was so moist and so rich that flowers seemed to spring up everywhere. There were great trees which had fallen because the soil was too damp to sustain their roots, but which lay still living where they fell; beautiful ferns had found a place upon their trunks, and had thence scattered their seeds on to neighboring tree-trunks which were still standing; they had thus made their way upward to the very summit, and spread out like palms. In some parts of the wood there were open vistas which had made themselves, for dead trees from time immemorial lay where they had fallen; nothing had been touched, nothing removed. Great round stones were scattered all over this region. Some indeed had been, as it were, picked up and incorporated by ancient chestnut-trees, which had grown round them as they lay upon the ground, and as the trees grew they carried the stone with them, as it were, in their very entrails, — like some enormous egg, which they displayed with pride as a proof of their vitality and vigor. But the

most beautiful part of the wood was the middle, which having fewer rocks and less moisture had borne pines of enormous growth, straight as church candles, and so tufted on top that the light was green under their branches, as we sometimes see in moonlight. Emilien at one moment lost himself in surprise.

"Is it night?" he exclaimed. "It seems to me we are in an enchanted forest. Perhaps the forests primeval that I have heard of are like this, and if we travelled far away to see them we should only find ourselves in what would seem a bit of France."

This marvellous wood was standing long after the Revolution; now, alas! the trees have been cut down, and nothing is left of it but brushwood. But the soil is cultivated, cottages are built and inhabited, and land is as dear there and as much in demand as in the best wheat-producing departments. There are however hills and dales of considerable extent, where very ancient trees still present a specimen of what the land must have been in the remote days of the Gauls. The quarry-men have again taken possession of the Druidical stones, and the Parelle has been thrown down. But since there are many granite rocks along the bed of the rivulet it may be long before all are destroyed. The Great Durderin (a corruption of Druiderin) is still standing, and our Fairy Island has not greatly changed; but it has lost its name. The fairies have passed away, and the traveller who would like to visit their ancient haunts will have to ask at the nearest farm-house — Petit Pommier — for the way to the Big Stones. There is less poetry in those parts nowadays, but more hard work and less superstition.

As we returned homeward from this walk we had a great and sudden scare. We saw on the open ground

of our Fairy Island Dumont talking to two men who were armed with pikes, and who wore red scarfs round their waists and great cockades in their red woollen caps.

"Stand still where you are; we must not show ourselves," I said to Emilien, drawing him into the bushes. "They are looking for you."

"For you and for Dumont too, then," he replied; "you are hiding a man who is skulking from the ranks of the army — a fugitive! Let us hide where we can see them; for if they meddle with Dumont I shall go to his assistance. Two against two, and in a lonely spot — "

"Say three against two; for I should help you," I cried, "were it only by slinging stones. In my young days I was as skilful as any of the boys at killing birds, and I can take good aim."

We had no need for such preparations. The men quietly took leave of Dumont, and went off, passing close to us without seeing us.

"We have got off well," said Dumont, as soon as we rejoined him. "They have been sent out to look after the quarry-man's son, and they asked me the way to his cottage. They looked ours all over, but there was nothing not suitable for peasants except the books, which I hid when I saw them coming. When they saw three beds, they asked me the sex and age of my children. I told them what we had agreed upon, and they were satisfied. They had no orders to meddle with us, nor did they seem to me very zealous to execute what concerned the poor fellow they were out after. They don't like to have to go through all this wild country, and as I took care to direct them wrong they will get more and more astray. Never

mind; Emilien must get out his wooden leg again, and must not go too far away from home."

"I am ashamed of this deceit, — I hate it," cried Emilien; "only upon your account would I submit to it still. But tell me, did you get any news?"

"They said that they were *emptying the prisons* in all the big towns; which means that they are sending all the prisoners to execution. Just now, they said, things were going on famously. The courts see no need of a trial, and they do without proofs. All that is wanted is an informer to denounce and a judge of some kind to pass sentence. Berry and La Marche, however, are still quiet. The people are not bloodthirsty in these provinces; nobody is denounced; nobody has been put to death since the poor priest, whom no one dared to plead for. The general poverty is so great that no one has spirit enough to hate his neighbor, and fear hinders the beginning of quarrels. This is all that I made out, for the men had not much information, and I did not like to seem too curious."

The next time I was alone with Dumont he told me that Madame Elizabeth was guillotined, and that the dauphin was in prison.

"Don't let us tell Emilien," he said to me. "He always has refused to believe that children could be made victims of these persecutions. He does not choose to see how wicked the Republic is. Do not let us set him to thinking that his sister may be arrested because of him."

"But oh, Dumont!" I cried, "could we not find out if Louise is still in safety; and if she is not safe where she is, could we not get her here? The nights are fine and still long; one might walk thirty miles between sunset and sunrise, and reach the Monastery at early dawn, rest all day, and start back the next night. I have done

harder things. If you would teach me the way exactly, for you know the roads —"

"Ah, Nanette!" cried Dumont, "I see you have no confidence in me. You think me good for nothing. You despise me, — and I deserve it."

"Don't talk of that, dear uncle," I said. "If you were ever in the wrong I have forgotten it. We will draw lots if you like, to see which of us shall make the journey. But as we must say nothing to Emilien, but go off at night when he is asleep, and be far away by the time he wakes, it would not be as easy for you as for me; for you sleep in the same room, close beside him."

"Not a bit!" said Dumont. "He sleeps as a lad ought to sleep at his age, and I could get off easily enough without waking him. I have done it twenty times. When it is daylight, you can tell him that you sent me away on some errand. By nightfall you can let him know the truth, but assure him that I will be back by the next morning; for I promise you I will. I know that Emilien will pass an uncomfortable night expecting me; but that is better than leaving *la petite* in danger, and he will easily forgive me for having disobeyed him. Come, give me your consent. I want to go upon that trip, you see, and to make it all turn out well. I have a great fault to make up for, and I never shall forgive myself till I have proved that I am still a man fit to be trusted."

I yielded. I knew that Emilien dreamed of his sister every night, and that if he had not thought himself bound in honor not to give us any cause for uneasiness, he would long ago have run any risk to know what had happened to Louise in the midst of this persecution of all born nobles.

I made believe to be tired that night, so that every one might get to bed earlier than usual; and soon I heard

Dumont going away. My heart was very full; he might be going to his death, and I could not close my eyes. If Emilien found out that he was gone, he would hasten after him. He dearly loved our poor Dumont. And how he would reproach me for having let him go!

Fortune favored us, however. Dumont had not to go very far for news. While trying to take a short cut he got lost in the woods, and was obliged to wait till daylight before he could turn his face eastward. He was near a little village called Bounat, and not thinking it best to go into it without some purpose, he resolved to come home, that he might not make us uneasy about the length of his journey, which he would put off till another night, and take better precautions.

As he was coming back he suddenly fell in with an old gamekeeper from Franqueville, whose name was Boucherot, — one of his old friends, an honest reliable man. They embraced each other very heartily; and Boucherot, who had been passing the night in the village, where he had a married sister, told Dumont all he wanted to know.

The Marquis of Franqueville was dead. He had died in some foreign country shortly after his wife. Nothing was known about the elder son. The confiscated property had been sold, even the Park and Castle, which M. Costejoux had bought at a low price. He had put his mother there, and a young lady who was called his great-niece. She was seldom visible, but many people in the village thought that she was Mademoiselle Louise de Franqueville, much taller and handsomer than she had promised to be when a child.

As for Boucherot, he had got a near glimpse of her, and he was certain it was she; but he had told all those who had formerly detested little Louise that he could not

recognize her. Indeed, she ran no great danger even were she known to be there. M. Costejoux had become all powerful in the village ever since he had detected the rascality of Prémel, and had accused Pamphilion publicly of taking money from prisoners, and of living on bribes. He had been so determined to unmask these men, that they had both been tried and sent to the guillotine. Boucherot added that if Emilien were still in prison he would be soon got out of it by M. Costejoux, who was the most just and generous of men.

Dumont at first did not like to trust our secrets to his friend. He asked him if he had not heard that Emilien had escaped from prison? No, he had not heard it. Prisoners were so numerous everywhere that they *got lost* in the changes that were constantly made. Pamphilion, indeed, had called for several whose names on the prison register were all that could be found; but M. Costejoux had rid the country of this wicked man, and now those only were arrested who had been openly opposed to the Republic, or those whose royalist plots were fully proved. Great rigor was still kept up with regard to these persons; but the influence of an honest man had succeeded in the province to that of a rascal, and conspiracies were no longer invented as a means of getting rid of personal enemies, or of making money out of suspected aristocrats.

When Dumont had ascertained the situation, he thought that he might wholly trust his friend, and he had brought him with him to our cabin. Emilien was very happy on learning that his sister was in safety, and he gave Boucherot, who was going back to Franqueville, a letter of thanks for M. Costejoux, written in a way that would not compromise him. In it he also asked him if he might not now show himself, and comply with the military law, —

as he had intended to do from the first, and desired to do still. He asked also if the companions of his solitude might go home without fear of being molested.

M. Costejoux's answer reached us in a week, brought by the good Boucherot, who took as much interest in Emilien as if he had been related to him. M. Costejoux wrote: —

"My dear fellow, stay where you are. Before long you will be free to come forth and do your duty. We have still to inspire fear and put down treason; but though we try as much as possible to get the best men to act for us, we cannot make all our agents honest or intelligent. A difficulty so widely felt cannot but lead to many fatal mistakes. The examination of Prémel's correspondence has entirely exculpated you from any blameworthy intentions; but we have so many affairs to attend to that I don't want to have to save you a second time. I should be in danger if considered the protector of your family. It is enough that my mother has devoted herself to your sister. Keep out of the way, therefore, and be sure that shortly justice will again flourish in France. Robespierre and St. Just have but a few more obstacles to surmount to enable the Republic, freed from all its enemies, to become all that she ought to be, all that they hope to see her, — a tender mother gathering her children to her bosom, and bestowing upon all of them happiness and safety. Yes, my young friend, wait a few weeks longer, and you will see the punishment of that excess of ferocious vigor that has been the work of traitors, who desired to betray and sully our cause. I have already begun to shape my actions to that end, and I hope to purge the nation of conspirators and wretches like Prémel and Pamphilion. Then regenerated France will inaugurate the reign of holy brotherhood."

There was a postscript: —

"Your two friends have not been accused of favoring your flight, since your escape has been passed over quietly, and is somewhat uncertain. There is therefore no reason why they

may not return to Valcreux, where the citizen Prior is not molested, and continues to reside without trouble. The Republic protects those who have taken the oath, and is only harsh towards such priests as stir up civil war."

Thus M. Costejoux, a man kindly and intelligent, had come to believe that Robespierre and St. Just might regenerate France after bleeding her to death! He expected to see her pacified all at once, after so many bitter hatreds had been roused. That was not my view of the situation, nor Dumont's; we were longing for the downfall of the leaders of the Reign of Terror. Emilien said nothing, but he thought much. At last he roused himself.

"You are right," he said, "and Costejoux is wrong. He is a man of enthusiasm, who has hoped to serve his country — and who has served her — at the cost of violent remedies, even if she died under heroic treatment. His party has divided all men into two classes, — the warrior class, who will first deliver France and then oppress her; and the political class, which will never attain its end, but will remain a smouldering heap of hatreds and of vengeance perhaps for the next hundred years. Poor France! There is all the more reason that we should labor for her and give her our love."

XX.

Since Dumont and I could now return home in safety, I resolved to absent myself for three days, and to go and see if the Prior was well cared for; for M. Costejoux did not mention his health, and Boucherot had no means of knowing. We had left him very much troubled with the asthma, and I feared lest Mariotte's zeal in his service might have grown colder. Emilien approved, and I set off with Boucherot for the Monastery. He promised to bring me back; but as no one was my enemy, and as those who had planned Emilien's escape had not been inquired for, I had nothing to fear. I took the ass, in order to bring back clothes, books, and linen.

I took care to reach Valcreux after dark, so that no one might notice me in my boys' clothes; and I sent Boucherot forward, so that Mariotte might be ready to let me in without any exclamations of astonishment. All went off well. I went up to my own room without being noticed and put on my own dress, in which I could present myself to the Prior without shocking him.

I found him very weak, though still fat and ruddy. He could no longer walk out of doors, nor look after anything. My two cousins had been drafted into the army, and some old men had been hired to cultivate the land; but they raised nothing. The garden was neglected, and our meadows pastured all the beasts that anybody chose to drive in upon them. That they might not have any more trouble than necessary, the children had torn down

the bars and broken through the hedges. From his chamber window the Prior could see their goats destroying the garden that Emilien had put in such good order and had made so pretty. The poor man stormed and fretted in vain, sitting in his old arm-chair. He scolded Mariotte, who, active as she was, could not do everything. To see the Monastery in this state was heart-breaking; and as I could not help it, I almost regretted having come home. I had to resign myself to see the property that M. Costejoux had intrusted to us deteriorated and despoiled; but he was too just not to feel that circumstances had been too much for us, and that our being absent was from necessity and not caprice.

I tried to comfort the Prior by making him see this; but I could not manage it.

"You think I love money," he said. "I never did, and I can pity poverty; but these pilfering peasants destroy for the mere pleasure of destroying, and I cannot bear to see it. I shall die in a fit of passion, — I know I shall; and a state of anger is not a state of grace. Ah, Nanette, I have been very lonely for so sick a man! Since you left I have not had one day of happiness. If you only would come back into the fold! You can do so without danger. Could n't you leave Emilien with Dumont in that place where you tell me they are well off, and which they expect to leave before long? Can't they do without you now that the fine weather has come, and that they need not keep up such strict concealment? What have they to fear? Brother Pamphilion is dead, — God forgive me for being glad of it! Most men are mad; but he was wicked. He never would have pardoned you for getting me out of that dungeon. So now he has gone to whereever it has pleased the Lord to prepare a place for him,

and you would be in no danger; indeed I am more than likely to die here without friends or help, with nobody to whom I can say, 'Farewell, dear, I am going.' It is very hard on me."

"Have you any fault to find with Mariotte?" I said.

"No, indeed; but I can't converse with her, though she is a good woman. She is too superstitious for me; in my dying moments she might talk all manner of stuff to me. Think it over, Nanette, — you who are always full of the idea of duty, — and just see who needs you most, Emilien or I."

I was very much excited, and though I was very tired after my journey, I could not sleep. My heart swelled at the thought of parting with Emilien; I did not know how I should live if I had not him to think of at all hours. Once he had called me his mother, and I had learned to consider him my child; and yet he was the master of my life and the light of my soul. Never had I been so happy as in our solitude, where I hardly ever lost sight of him, where all my duties were for him; and when Costejoux had written, "Stay where you are for a few weeks," my heart had leaped for joy, for I said to myself, "I have still a few weeks to be happy in!"

But the Prior had spoken the truth. The life of Emilien was no longer in danger; it was now only prudence that kept him where he was. Everything had been long arranged: Dumont could go and come; their purse was well filled; they would want for nothing so soon as I had carried back some supplies.

On the other hand the Prior was alone, sick and depressed, with no one to look after him but a woman overburdened with work, who might fall ill herself, or die, or grow weary of waiting on him. I could see that though he

did her justice he was rough with her, and that that made her angry. I was unquestionably more essential to him than I was to Emilien, and in choosing to serve the one I cared for most I should be following my own feelings rather than my sense of duty.

Early in the morning I went to pray in the chapel of the Convent. No one went into it now. Though Robespierre had abolished the Goddess of Reason and permitted the free right of worship, the churches were still closed; nobody dared to call himself a Catholic. The bells had been all carried away. The peasant in places where there are no bells, cares little for public worship. The Prior could no longer have service even in his own room because of his infirmities.

I had some trouble in opening the chapel door; the lock was rusty and out of order. Piles of brushwood had been put before the chancel to mask the altar, and to preserve it from profanation, — this however none of our villagers had thought of doing; the lower parts of the ceiling were blackened by the dampness; hail had broken the window-panes. Pigeons had got in, taking refuge from the hungry village children, who ran after them with stones; there they had built their nest; there in all security they cooed forth their happiness. But when they saw me they were frightened; I was strange to them now.

I slipped behind the faggots; I drew near the sanctuary. I saw the great crucifix lying in a corner, with the face of the Crucified turned toward the wall. He who had been the friend of the poor and the victim of the powerful had found no mercy at the hands of these would-be apostles of equality and enemies of tyranny; he had been hidden out of sight, — he had been laid away.

When I left the chapel my heart felt very heavy; but

my resolution was taken. I went in search of the Prior.

"I am going back to-morrow," I said. "I shall tell my friends that I cannot stay, and then I will say good-by to them. I will rest one day, because it is a long journey; but the next day I will be back here again. Promise me to be patient till I return. I have made up my mind to come back and wait on you and take care of you, since I am all you have now."

"Go, daughter," he said. "God will bless you and reward you for what you are doing for me."

I kept my word: I left the day after, and six miles from our Fairy Island I thanked Boucherot and took leave of him. I knew my road, and did not wish to keep him longer from M. Costejoux.

I expected great grief and a sore parting; but I also knew that Emilien would think I was doing right, and would esteem me the more for it. That gave me strength. I was far from being prepared for something harder still.

As I was crossing the Forest of Bassoule I saw Dumont coming toward me with a bundle fastened to a stick hung over his shoulder, as if he was starting on a journey. I hastened forward.

"Were you coming to find me?" I said. "Were you anxious about me? I have not overstayed my time."

"I was coming to join you, my poor Nanon," he replied, "and to tell you that you had better stay at the Monastery. Emilien — ah, Nanon, summon up all your courage! — "

"He is arrested!" I cried, ready to faint, my limbs giving way under me.

"No, no," he said; "he is free, he is well, thank God! but he has gone."

"To the army?"

"Yes; he insisted upon it. He said to me: 'I have reread Costejoux's letter, and I understand it all. He tells me I have no personal enemies, that my escape is ignored; and though he exhorts me to *keep out of the way* (he does not mean *stay hidden*), it is only because my presence might compromise him, if I required his protection. So if I go into another province I shall peril neither him nor myself, and I shall escape the shame of remaining in idleness. At Chateauroux, the first town where I shall present myself as a stranger, with the certificate of *civisme* Costejoux gave me, under a false name, I shall explain to the authorities that sickness has hindered me hitherto from complying with the law, and I shall ask permission to enlist, — which will not be either a rash or a difficult proceeding. After that I shall join the army, — I don't care where, — and I shall resume possession of my honor and my liberty.' I wanted to go with him," continued Dumont, "but he proved to me that I should only add to the difficulty of making the required explanations; that I could not pass for his father without many dangerous and useless falsehoods, nor for his servant without betraying his position. He intends to give out that he is an orphan peasant-boy; and he gave me many good reasons, and was so very anxious that I had to give in. But I feel as if I were broken into four pieces; and I was going back to you, my child, that you might keep me from dying of sorrow."

"Then you think I am very strong myself?" I said, sinking down upon the turf, for I could stand no longer. "If you are broken in four pieces, I am nothing but crumbs. I would like to die here!"

I lost my courage completely, and the poor man forgetting his own sorrow was for the first time obliged to

comfort me. I did not rebel against the decision of Emilien; it had been made long before, and I had accepted it with the respect due to his character. I knew all along that he would soon leave, that my happiness would before long come to an end, that I only had it in possession for a little while; but to have him go off without telling me good-by, to have him doubt my courage and submission, was I thought worse than all the rest, and so humiliating that I would not complain of it even to Dumont.

"Come," said I at last, rising; "it is done, — he has willed it. If he saw us in our present state he would say we were wrong. Come home. I am not fit to set out for the Monastery until to-morrow, and I am not sorry to have an opportunity to take a last look at that poor Fairy Island, where we might have stayed a little longer, happier than ever because we knew that we were at last in safety. But he has decided that we shall not have that last remnant of happiness. His will be done."

"Yes, let us go back to the cabin," said Dumont; "we have things there to pack up, and other things to talk about together. But we must be more composed than we are now."

When we got back to our granite house, I stabled the ass; I lighted the fire; I prepared our evening meal; I busied myself as if nothing had happened. I had the tranquillity of despair. I tried to eat. Dumont endeavored to distract my thoughts by talking to me of the goats and of the hens that he had sold that they might not die of hunger, and something about a little cart that we might hire to carry off our effects, now increased by those I had brought back with me. I selected what we were to keep and what to leave. Dumont then decided that the ass could carry everything; and that having paid our rent in advance we

might put a bar or padlock on the door, and leave the cottage the next morning without saying anything to anybody, just as we had come there.

After supper, not being able to sleep, I walked to the bank of the little stream. We had gone there so often that we had made a little path down to it, which wound among the rocks among all the pretty wild-flowers that Emilien had taught me to know and to love. The stream there flowed under great rocks, and we could hear it rippling beneath our feet unseen; a little oak-grove shaded that edge of our island where the bank rose suddenly and formed a narrow gorge. There Emilien, forced always to remain near home, had loved to walk with me when our day's work was over. Prowling about we had found a sort of grotto, which ran under a great Druid stone almost as large as the Parelle, but still more remarkable for the great stone on top of it, balanced upon slight support. We had cleared out this grotto, thinking that we might hide in it in case of need. I went in now, and covering my face in my hands I burst into tears. Nobody could hear me sob in that cave, and it would I thought be such a relief!

But our good Dumont was anxious about me, the more because I had seemed so composed. He came in search of me; he heard me, and he called to me, —

"Come, Nanette, don't stay down in that cave; let us climb up on the Druids' stone. The night is fine; we had better be looking at the stars than at things under the earth. I have some important things to tell you, and maybe you will take heart again after they are told."

I followed him; and when we were seated on the Druids' Altar, he said, —

"I can see that what troubles you the most is that he

did not tell you beforehand, and did not see you for the last time before he went away."

"Well — yes," I said, "that does wound me the most. It makes me fancy that he imagines me without sense or courage."

"Then, Nanette, I had better tell you all, and talk to you as if you were my daughter. You know that Emilien loves you as if you were his sister and his mother and his daughter all in one. He always speaks so to you. But do you know something else? He is *in love* with you! He swears that you do not suspect it, though."

I was astonished and confused. He loved me!

Never had Emilien spoken to me of love; never had I said such a thing to myself. I thought he respected me too much, and would protect me always from all harm. He could not think of me in that light.

"Hush, Dumont," I replied; "Emilien never thought evil about me. He has too often protected me; he esteems me too much to think of such a thing."

"You don't understand me, Nanette. The love he bears you is the greatest proof of his esteem; for he wants to marry you. Has he never told you so?"

"Never! He has sometimes seemed to tell me that he would never marry rather than choose any one I might not like, or who would part me from him. But, marry me! — I am a peasant's daughter; he is the son of a Marquis! No — such a thing has never been and never can be! You must not talk about such things, Dumont."

"There are no longer any marquises, Nanette," he answered; "and if there were, — if the nobility and clergy should again by any chance float to the top, Emilien can expect no recognition from his family. He must be either a monk or a peasant. If a monk, he will have a little money

and be provided for; if a peasant, he will be so at his peril. Do you fancy that the Revolution will have improved the nobles? Which course would you advise for your friend?"

"To be a peasant, as in fact he has been for some years," I cried. "You think as I do, I am sure."

"Of course. Well, his choice has been made this good while, — you can see that yourself; and however things may turn out, labor and poverty must be the lot of the youngest son of his family. He has but one happiness to hope for in this world, — that of marrying the woman he loves; and he is fully resolved to do it. He is going to make a campaign or two, to receive what he calls the baptism of honor; and after that he will tell you himself what I now tell you from him, — what he never yet has thought it right to tell you: don't ask me why, you will understand it some day. Emilien is young and pure, but he is a young man after all; and he has not found it easy to live here with you so devoted and confiding, and to let you fancy that he was as calm as yourself. So, yesterday he said to me: 'I cannot bear it any longer. My self-possession might give way, my heart might overflow. Before long I might not have the courage to depart; I might grow unworthy of the happiness I hope to receive as my reward.' Yes, Nanette, those were his very words. You will understand them better when you think them over. I tell them to you that you may not think yourself despised; that on the contrary you may divine how much he loves you; that you may have courage, and may share the hope that he has carried away with him, pure from all self-reproach, — a hope for him and a hope for thee."

Later I will tell the reader how my head and heart received this revelation. Now the poem of my early girl-

hood is ended. I left the Fairy Isle with many tears, but they were not bitter tears, as those in the cave had been; and I re-entered the Monastery to live a work-day life, which was sometimes very hard. But from that time forward I was working with a well-defined purpose, — a purpose that in the end I was permitted to accomplish. The account of this purpose will form the third section of my story.

XXI.

I NEED not say with what joy the poor Prior saw me return. He had not dared to hope for me so soon. His great pleasure made me somewhat forget my own sorrow.

"You must not be too much obliged to me," I said; "Emilien has gone, so I am not making any sacrifice."

"And that comforts me," he said; "for I knew I had asked you to make one. Your merit is not the less, my daughter; for you meant to sacrifice to me a little season of happy intercourse with your best friend, and you took up your cross with resolution."

The Prior's words made me blush, and as he had sharp eyes he noticed it.

"Don't be ashamed," he said, "of the great love you bear him. I have long known it to be honest and true, for I did not always sleep as soundly as you fancied when you read and chatted by my side on winter evenings. I understood what it meant when you were getting excited over history and philosophy, and I knew you loved each other in all truth and purity, — I mean that you expected to be husband and wife when age and circumstances should permit you to be so."

"No, indeed, dear Prior," I said; "I expected no such thing. I never thought of it. Think now! did we ever say one word of love or marriage?"

"That's true; nor did he ever speak of things like that to you. But he spoke to me about them; for I was not so

ignorant and coarse-minded as not to be a little anxious about you, and I know that his intentions are all right. I know that he will never marry any other wife, and I approve of him."

I was delighted to find that the Prior knew all about it, and to be able to open my heart to him, — for I had many doubts that I wanted him to solve.

"Listen," I said. "I have known Emilien's kind intentions toward me only two days; and I do not know what to think or what to do. I am troubled and excited. I cannot sleep. I suffer less than I did from his departure, for I cannot tell you that his love displeases me; but I keep asking myself whether I should not do him a great wrong if I accepted it."

"What wrong could you do him? He is an orphan, — and if his father has not disinherited him the law does."

"Are you sure? There are so many new laws made nowadays. What one set of men makes another unmakes. If the *émigrés* come back in triumph —"

"Well, then, the law of primogeniture replaces Emilien where he was before the Revolution."

"But if his brother dies before him — unmarried — without children? You see I have thought about it all."

"We must suppose a great deal before we admit that Emilien could ever recover the property of his family. Suppose, however, anything you please; I cannot see that his marriage with you would bar his being indemnified for his losses by the State, if it ever happened that such an indemnity were contemplated."

"I have thought of that, too. I have said to myself that it would be very difficult for the State to resume what the State has sold. But you talk of an indemnity that might be paid to those whose parents became *émigrés:*

in all justice they ought not to be punished for their father's faults. So in any case Emilien might recover some of his losses. He might then be in a position to make a good match which might make him a rich man; and I ought not to allow him to lose this chance by marrying me, for I have nothing, nor can I ever have anything. Suppose he found out what he might have done, after our marriage, — I know well enough he would try not to be sorry, and would never reproach me; but I should reproach myself. Then he has a whole family of cousins, aunts, and uncles whom he does not know, but whom he would know if they came back to France. Those fine people would despise me and blame him. Indeed, I fear that what he wants can never be, unless I accept for him losses and mortifications that I might spare him if I made him consent to give up this project of marriage."

I saw that my reasoning made an impression on the Prior, and I felt it bitterly, for I own I had hoped he would have refuted me. Ever since Dumont had spoken to me I had been doing nothing but dream and reason with myself; and sometimes I was wild with joy, and sometimes I was trembling with fear and with regret. I had made up my mind to lay all my scruples before the Prior, and I could only reassure myself by hoping that he would make no more of them than Dumont had done. I saw, however, that he was impressed by them, and that I had called his attention to possible contingencies in the future which he had forgotten. He praised me for my good sense, and my good reasoning, — which was poor consolation. I wept all night after this conversation, and dared not renew the subject, fearing that I might but bring him over to think as I did, and that I might then feel myself forced to make a resolution too terribly painful to me.

A week after I returned to the Monastery I got a letter from Emilien. He had enlisted at Orleans, and was starting for the frontier and the army. The next week came another, in which he said, —

"I am a soldier at last. I know you approve, and I am satisfied with myself. Do not be uneasy. A soldier's life is rough, particularly at present; but nobody cares, nobody grumbles, nobody seems to know that he suffers. We are wild to fight and to drive back the invaders. We are bare of everything save courage and hope, and these stand instead of other things. My heart besides, my Nanon, is full of thy remembrance. With the love I feel for an angel like thee, and with my love of country I have enough, whatever happens, to keep me alive."

His other letters were all short, and they always said the same things. I could see he was destitute of everything, even of time to write letters; and I could see too that he did not wish to make me uneasy, nor to tell me of his fatigue, of forced marches, or of battles, until they were well over. He would then just mention them in a few words, merely telling me that he was glad he had been present; but I could see that he had always been in the thick of the danger, and had bravely borne fatigue. In each letter there was always once — and once only — the word *love;* and his purpose was always the same, — to fight for his country, and then to come back and marry me. Poor Emilien! he was a hundred times worse off than he chose to tell me. Our troops were suffering more than any army had ever done before; we knew it from men who came back sick or wounded. My heart was so full that sometimes it gave me physical pain, — I feared that I might grow asthmatic like the Prior; but in the few letters that I

managed to send Emilien, I was careful not to show him that I was unhappy.

I gave him to understand that I was cheerful and resolute, like himself. I spoke of hope and of affection, and I could not bear to cross his plan of marriage. It seemed to me I should have killed him had I done so, and that I had no right to take away the hope that nerved him through his trials. On the other hand, I could not bring myself to write the word *love*. It would have seemed like an engagement, and my conscience would have been ill at ease.

But I am looking forward too far, for I had only received two letters from him when some great news reached us early in August, 1793. The Prior told it me.

He had just got letters from his family.

"Well, Nanon," he said, "I always told you that Robespierre and his friends would not live to finish their work. The means they used were bad: the means have destroyed the end and killed themselves. They have fallen; all are dead. The right they claimed of getting rid of any obstacle at any price has been turned against them. Men who called themselves better patriots than they have put them to death for not going far enough. What is to come of it all? Nobody can do worse than they did, unless they bring back torture, or set fire to the four corners of France."

The old mayor, who was present, was glad of the fall of Robespierre. In 1790 he had been a republican; he became a royalist after the deaths of the King and Queen. But he only talked openly to us, — in whom he had full confidence, — and then only in whispers, for in those times there were things that could never be spoken aloud. There were no discussions, no disputes, in rural France. The

people feared to let their words drop, as if they had been marked money intended to tempt informers.

"Believe me or not, as you please," resumed the mayor; "but it seems to me our woes will end with Robespierre. He was a man who played into the hands of the invaders, and sold the blood of our poor soldiers."

"You are wrong, citizen Chénot," said the Prior. "The man was honest; and possibly that was why those wickeder than himself have killed him."

"They could n't be wickeder! They say he was clever, and knew what he was about. Those who succeed him may be stupider, and sensible people may get rid of them with less difficulty."

Such was the opinion of the whole commune, and before long the people confided it to each other in whispers. After a while, five or six persons might be seen talking together. We had not yet heard of the new order of things, and all we did hear was so confused that we could not understand it. But there seemed new life in the air. Terror grew less, — the Reign of Terror was over. Ill or well used, liberty is a blessing.

It was about the end of August when I received my third letter from Emilien. I was amazed to find that he regretted Robespierre and the Jacobins. He had not liked them; but he said France was becoming royalist, and that the army was afraid of being betrayed. Gentle and patient as he was, his anger was kindled against those who thought only of power instead of the defence of their country. He did not go into battle for mere honor; he seemed to go into it with rapture, and the fury of fight had taken possession of him as well as others. He told me he had been promoted for having done his duty. A few weeks later he sent us word that he was an officer.

"Just see that!" cried the Prior. "He may turn out a General!"

This speech gave me much to think of. It was not at all impossible that Emilien had a brilliant military career before him, like many others whom we heard of. If so, he would not care to cast in his lot with the old nobles; he would be above their disasters or their disdains. He would be rich and powerful. Ah, but in that case he ought not to marry a poor peasant girl! His own good heart still bound him to me; but the peasant girl ought not to let him make the sacrifice.

At first I was terribly cast down; and at last I comforted myself by the thought that I should always keep his full esteem, and prove myself more worthy of his love by this great sacrifice. I would not let myself be weak; I would not play the love-sick girl who pines and plains. That part seemed unworthy of me, and I own I had grown very proud of myself ever since I had found out how dearly I was loved. I made up my mind to be satisfied with that great happiness; it would be enough, I thought, if I could always live on that idea, and sustain myself with that sweet remembrance. All the rest of my life I would devote to rewarding Emilien for the happiness I felt in the love that he had once given me, and in doing everything I could for him and his without thinking of myself.

One day Dumont said to me: —

"I think I had better make a visit to the Fairy Isle. They say that what we sowed has produced a splendid harvest. Our friend Boucherot, who has relatives in that part of the country, went over and reaped it. He gave the landlord the number of sheaves we agreed upon, and has stored the rest in our cabin. The peasants about there are very

honest; and besides, they fear the brownies too much to break open the padlock that Boucherot fastened on the door. Anyhow, we must do something, for our lease will expire in a few days. We have no way of bringing here such a lot of straw and grain. I think I had better thresh it out, and sell it over yonder."

"You had better go," I said. "You did well to think of it. The money will belong to Emilien and to you; I did no field-work, so I have no part in it."

"No work!" he cried, "when you were busy all day long getting food for us, and preparing us good lodging? But for what *you* did, where would *our* work have been? We will all share alike, Nanon; but as all I have is intended for Emilien, and as — without increasing it — without knowing — I might spend it, you had better take care of it all."

"I will, if you like," I said. "Good-by. I envy you the journey. What would I not give now to see the dear old place that I once quitted without knowing what I did, and without saying good-by! Do something for me, dear Dumont, — something that will please me very much. Bring me a big posy of the flowers that grow on the bank of the stream near a flat rock which looks like a big sofa. The flowers that grow there Emilien loved, and he used to sit upon that rock to study them."

Dumont brought me back the money for our harvest and a nosegay as big as a sheaf. Though the harvest had been excellent in our part of the country, grain was very dear; nobody knew why. Dumont had carried ours to market. He got three hundred francs for it in three thousand francs worth of assignats, which he changed into silver at once; for day after day paper money depreciated, and the time

was at hand when every one refused to take it at any discount.[1]

I put this little sum aside, and filled my room with the flowers which reminded me of our former happiness. Perhaps I should never see Emilien more; perhaps he was killed at the very moment when I breathed the perfume of those little wild pinks and honeysuckle which brought back his presence. I laughed and then I cried all alone in my own chamber. I kissed the flowers, I tied them up into a bride's bouquet. I permitted myself to fancy for one moment that I was carrying that bouquet, leaning on the arm of my dear love; that he was leading me to the river bank under the old willow, — where once he had said to me: "Look at that tree, that river full of irises, those stones where I have often thrown my line; remember the oath that I make now, that I will never cause you to be unhappy." And then I fancied that I showed him the dried leaves of the willow I had hidden in the bib of my apron and had ever since kept with great care, — like a relic very dear to me. After these reveries — the last in which I ever thought I should indulge — I went back to my duties, which were not light; for everything about the Monastery had fallen into great disorder, and I had to take up a position not easily sustained by one so young. As everybody helped themselves to everything, in virtue of their poverty, which grew greater every day, I thought I would begin by choosing some of the poorest families, and giving them the right of pasture in our fields till further notice. Then I put back the bars and stopped up the holes in the inclosures; and when the peasants came and pulled

[1] Assignats were promises to pay out of the sale of the public lands and the confiscated property of the *émigrés*, which brought in far less money than was expected.—TRANS.

them down, I insisted that whoever came in must pass through the bars or not enter our pastures. Of course they paid no attention to me. On that, not shrinking from the difficulty, I gave them to understand that I knew the worthy poor from those who were trading on their necessities. This gave me at once a party interested in supporting me. For a time my stop-gaps were pulled out every night and put back every morning. After a while the trespassers grew tired, finding public opinion growing strong against them.

After a while I picked out those who were poor partly from unthrift and want of energy, and persuaded them to find pasture in other and more distant places that were more fertile than our fields; and by winter time, having got money for some work, and having helped some who were in need with what I earned, I found myself in a position to make my rights respected.

M. Costejoux, to whom I wrote,— giving him news of our young officer, and telling him that so far as I could I watched over his interests, — wrote back that he was much pleased by the noble conduct of Emilien, and that he should be perfectly satisfied by any care I might be able to take of his property. He said,—

"Whatever pillage there may have been, it cannot be worse than it has been at Franqueville, which I am obliged to put up with, because I cannot live there all the time. Nor can my old mother or my *young ward* do anything to hinder it. Indeed it would not be prudent for them to interfere; for the peasants, who began by robbing the nobles and the wealthy out of spite, have now begun again on the pretext that they must avenge the crimes of the Republic. I don't know what public opinion may be at Valcreux, and had rather remain ignorant of it; but I very much fear that everywhere the royalist reaction will extinguish

the last sparks of liberty, and overthrow both honor and the love of country."

M. Costejoux also commissioned me to tell Emilien that his sister was safe, and wanted for nothing. He asked his address, intending to write to him himself. He ended by calling me his dear *citoyenne*, and asking my pardon for having up to that time treated me as a child. He saw by my letter, he said, and still more by what he had seen of my determination, intelligence, and spirit of self-sacrifice, that I was a person worthy of his respect and his regard.

This letter gave me pleasure, and reawakened a hope that I might yet feel it right to accept the love of Emilien. If I was not like the common run of peasant women, might I not do him honor? But then came the thought of poverty. Ought I to expose him to so great a danger in the troubled and uncertain times in which we lived? Suppose he came back a sub-lieutenant without means, how could he bring up a family if all his wife had was what she made by her own labor?

Then there came to me a strange idea, one probably inspired by love itself. Why might I not become, not rich perhaps, but mistress of a fortune which might authorize me to accept without scruple or humiliation, for better or for worse, the hand of Emilien?

I had heard of good people who had risen from nothing by mere force of will and patience. I began to calculate; and I found out that at the price land was at that moment it would be possible in a few years to triple any capital laid out in buying it. The thing needful was to understand the business part of farming; and I had acquired very good ideas upon that subject by considering what in the past had failed and what succeeded round me. I took

counsel of our former mayor, for the Prior saw things on too small a scale, — only from day to day as it were. Père Chénot was better informed and more enterprising. Yet even he was timid. He had made money slowly under the monarchy, and as things were now he might have greatly increased his means, for he discussed and understood the situation admirably; but he was afraid to act for himself. Politics made him habitually uneasy. He was always in dread of the restoration of the public lands to their old owners; and there were moments when he turned back into a democrat, and regretted the downfall of M. de Robespierre.

I counted up my money. Deducting what had been lent me by M. Costejoux, and what was still due to him out of the profits of his property, my personal share of the harvest at Crévant, the money I received from my lessons which I still continued to give, my little profits on my beasts, and on the rent of my house ever since my cousins had ceased to inhabit it, amounted in all to three hundred francs, fourteen sous, and six farthings. With this magnificent sum I set out to purchase the Monastery and its dependencies, to enlarge them by fresh purchases, and to make the estate as large as the property the monks had enjoyed, and far more productive.

I told my purpose to nobody. Ridicule kills aspiration, and we never succeed with anything about which we permit ourselves or others to doubt. I began by buying with one third of my capital a bit of waste-land, while I used another third to cultivate it, enclose it, and enrich it. Every one said I was mad, and was taking the very shortest road to lose everything. The peasant of that day would lay out his own time and labor on his land, but not his money. If he had no manure, the land had to do with-

out it; it brought forth accordingly; yet with time it might improve; but I foresaw the moment when all the money hidden away would be brought forth to buy land, and I wanted to increase both my possessions and their value, so as to double my capital when the right time came. My plan succeeded. In 1794 I was offered for my land two hundred francs.

"No, indeed," I said; "at that price I should not get interest on what I have laid out on it. I shall wait."

In 1795 I sold the lot for five hundred and eighty francs. Other purchases brought me richer returns; but I will not enter into particulars that might be tedious. All those who ever did business at that time know that to succeed, it was only necessary to have confidence in the future. In our part of the country few felt this at first. Up to the close of the Convention, those who had bought lands early in the Revolution were anxious in 1794 to dispose of them, and frequently sold out at a loss. Under the Directory they began to buy again. This caused a good many losses at first, but in the end they made them up again; and those who like myself had not been discouraged by the bitterness of party strife, made great profits during the few following years in a legitimate way.

XXII.

I ALSO made money in wool. Wool was very dear at that time, though sheep were abundant. At first, free pasture upon sequestrated lands had fattened the flocks. Every one had doubled and tripled the number of animals he could maintain; but dishonesty never profits in the end. When the pastures gave out, the sheep dwindled and perished, and their owners were glad to sell them at any price. I bought them one by one from different owners on credit, until I had a considerable flock, which I sent off to the neighborhood of Crévant under charge of a poor old man in whom I recognized intelligence and activity. I gave him part of the profits; and after hiring a cottage and pasture near the Fairy Isle, he settled there. The pasture cost a mere song. Out of one shearing we paid all expenses, and laid by a handsome sum. We had lambs in plenty about Christmas, which were a further source of profit.

While I thus operated on my own account, I set to rights the affairs of the Prior's stewardship, to the great surprise of M. Costejoux, who called me in his letters his "dear manager." It is safe to say that but for me he would have got nothing from his property.

I perceived that the land was excellent, but that it needed capital; and I asked him to come and see what had better be done. He did so in the course of the winter. A very rough and bitter winter it was, made harder by

a rascally kind of famine. I say *rascally*, because the scarcity of food was the work of speculators. M. Costejoux, when he saw our beautiful crops, perceived this at once, and pointed it out to me.

When we had talked much about Emilien, who had written him, he said, letters "brimming over with patriotism," and when he had told me that Louise became prettier every day, and that she was the spoilt child of his household, I resolved (seeing that he was entirely frank with me) to open my heart to him, and to tell him my great plan. But I did not mention it as something about which I had made up my mind; I did not tell him that the Monastery was the great end of my ambition; I only consulted him in a general way about the possibility of making a fortune with almost nothing to begin upon, in view of the great opportunities presented by the sale of national property and the general aspect of affairs.

He listened attentively, looked at me keenly, asked me a few questions about details, and answered as follows:

"My dear girl, your idea is excellent, and you must put it into practice. You must buy the Monastery and its dependencies. I do not care to make money out of the estate; I bought it out of patriotism, and my end is accomplished, since it has supported an industrious and worthy family such as yours. You must marry young Franqueville, and bring him the Monastery as your portion."

"Very good; but how can I do so unless you sell it to me on time?"

"I 'll give you twenty years to pay me for it. Is that enough?"

"Paying a thousand francs a year, plus interest: it is plenty."

"I don't want any interest."

"Oh, well then we shall not make any bargain! Emilien is proud, and that arrangement would seem like charity."

"Well, then, I will take interest, — two per cent. That is the rent of lands in our neighborhood."

"I beg your pardon, — two and a half per cent."

"I should be quite satisfied with two, for Franqueville at this moment brings me in nothing. I am astonished at all that you have done to prevent the Monastery from being equally unprofitable. I expected that it would bring in nothing, but would be a loss and a worry to me for years to come; therefore I assure you that the sum you have just paid over to me ought to count as part of your first payment on your purchase. From this moment it is yours. As you are a minor, we cannot make a legal contract, but our mutual word is enough; and I will take care that in case I die before you are of age, my intention shall be carried out, even if it takes the form of a bequest. Or if necessary, Dumont might act as purchaser. I will arrange all the business part of the transaction; you need not disturb yourself about that. And now let me tell you, you owe me no gratitude, — it is you who are doing me a service. I want to lay out all the money I can on Franqueville in order to make it profitable. I see by what you tell me — indeed I had already seen it — that to that end I shall have to make considerable sacrifices. Its improvement will deprive me of ready money for several years to come; and you lighten my burden by offering me the interest of the capital I have laid out here. I am a little afraid that from this point of view the bargain bears too hard upon you, and that it is only of advantage on my side. Think this over before you enter into it."

"I have thought it over, and I made up my mind about it long ago," I answered. "A property which to a man

like you, who cannot live upon it, is a mere investment is to a peasant great riches. He lives on it and by it; he has not your wants, your obligations of hospitality, your household needs, nor your outside expenses. In order to live here you used to plan great repairs and new necessary buildings; your housekeeping would be expensive, for the place does not produce all that would be required on your table. We peasants wear coarse homespun and linen woven in the village, and we make it up ourselves; we go barefoot in summer, and wear wooden shoes in winter; we eat vegetables and buckwheat and chestnuts, — a diet which we find all-sufficient; we make plum wine, which we think good; our own hands save us servants' wages; we are always in good health; we are constantly upon the spot to give an eye to things; we work at what we know about, whereas you would grope in darkness; and with our little savings (which you would not put by as we should do) we get all out of the land that it will yield. So while I pay you two per cent interest I shall be also able to be paying back the capital. The bargain therefore is good for both of us, and I say, *Done!*"

"Yes. But we must think about the Prior," said M. Costejoux. "The poor old man can do nothing for a living, and could not live anywhere but in his convent. I know you will want to keep him; but his support —"

"Oh, I will manage that; don't let that trouble you."

"My dear Nanette, it will add to your expenses. Suppose we set that against the interest you were to pay me?"

"It is not necessary."

"But it would help you. You are beginning a big enterprise —"

"If I began it with an aged father on my hands, I

should have to count his support into my expenses, and I would stint myself if necessary to see that he had enough. That would be only natural; it is the duty of many others."

"I too plead a right to consider the Prior as an aged relative whom I ought to care for. Come, my brave Nanette, let us divide this pleasure. You shall pay me one per cent as long as the Prior lives. I must have it so; and this is my last word."

It was also agreed that our bargain should be kept a secret. I did not want to tell the Prior, because his pride might perhaps have taken the alarm; for he considered himself the head and manager of the establishment because I gave him certain writing to do, which I could have done just as well myself, and much faster. My only confidant was Dumont, whose joy was very great, and who insisted on at once setting me free from the payment of several years' replacement of capital by paying over to M. Costejoux the three thousand francs of his savings which were in the hands of a banker, the stepbrother of our friend. He had only to write a few words to authorize M. Costejoux to get the money; and I consented, — not feeling that I had the right to hinder this excellent friend from helping forward the future fortunes of Emilien, for all was for him. I wanted the purchase to be made in his name, but M. Costejoux would not consent to it.

"One never knows what may happen," he said. "Franqueville is the most honest and honorable of men, and I know him to be industrious; but I am not certain that he has your management or your perseverance. I see that the business is quite safe in your hands, and even for his interest in its widest sense I will only treat with you."

When I had given M. Costejoux the best supper I could possibly get for him, and when the Prior and Dumont had gone to bed, we had another conversation, which made a great impression on me. I asked him frankly if Louise's disposition had improved.

"My dear girl," he said, "she will always be capricious; and I pity the husband who may have to put up with her, — unless indeed that husband were cleverer than herself, and had more firmness than a woman. You are an exception, Nanon, — a very remarkable exception: you are neither exactly a man nor a woman, but you have the good qualities of both. Louise de Franqueville is a woman, a true woman, with all the arts and all the charms of weakness. For weakness is charming: that is the reason we are all so fond of children; and very often we encourage their little tyrannies for the sake of the amusement we have in submitting to them. I may tell you besides, that in such a life as I have led for the last two years, — a life of constant struggle, of assumed authority; often compelled to use rigor; waging a perpetual conflict between my natural disposition and the mistrust which by my public duty is imposed on me, — I feel an irresistible impulse to throw it all off in the bosom of my family, to forget that I am a terrorist, to allow myself to be tyrannized over in my turn, were it only by the peckings of a little bird. My servants are blindly devoted to me; my excellent mother sees everything through my eyes, — she would not change her cap or buy a snuff-box without asking my opinion. I lead a very joyless life. We Jacobins have to protest by our own seriousness against the dissipations of the *jeunesse dorée* and the guilty compliances of the Girondists. In the solitude in which I live, now that I have quitted the agitations of business and the excitement of active political life, I must

have a tyrant to relieve me of the burden of my own will. Louise is that tyrant: she is a flirt by nature; she teases me; she makes me give up everything else and pay her undivided homage; she contradicts me, she laughs at me, she ruffles me; sometimes she even abuses me and gives me pain: to force her to repent her ingratitude and to ask my pardon then becomes a fresh interest. I always come off conqueror, though such duels often take place. The excitement does me good and does me harm; but the good and the harm both differ from the emotions excited by politics; and I need to forget that the interests of mankind have been gravely compromised, if not sacrificed, by what has been going on."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "talk to me about that, M. Costejoux, and then we will go back and talk about Louise. In the first place I wish to understand how and why all seems to you to be lost, — you whom I know to have been so full of hope when you wrote: 'A few more weeks of rigor and of energy, and then will come the reign of justice and fraternity.' Did you really think that you would ever be trusted by the timid after having put them in such fear, or be reconciled to the royalists after all that you have made them suffer? For my part I do not believe that men ever forgive the fear that they have been made to endure."

"I know that now," he answered excitedly, — "I know it now but too well! The moderates hate us more bitterly than the royalists, for the royalists are at least not cowards. On the contrary, they exhibit an audacity which we thought we had overcome. Ridiculously dressed in contradistinction to us Jacobins, they affect airs of effeminacy; they call themselves *muscadins* and the *jeunesse dorée*. At this moment they are marching about Paris with big canes, which they make believe to carry for fash-

ion's sake, but which they use every day in bloody brawls with us patriots. They are cruel, — more cruel than we were! They murder in the streets and on the highways; they massacre prisoners; they incite to anarchy by crime, vice, debauchery, and dishonesty, all of which they carry on with a high hand. They hope to bring back monarchy after cutting the throat of the Republic, and they do not hesitate to avow their design of forcing France by any atrocity to give herself up into their hands."

"Alas, M. Costejoux! your party did not hold such theories, I know; but what were your actions? Violence has led to violence. You did not like to employ violence yourself, but your friends did, as you well know, since we have all learned what passed at Nantes, Lyons, and elsewhere. You cannot deny that power has been confided to atrocious monsters. You have opened your eyes too late, and you must bear the consequences. The nation detests the Jacobins, because they bore hard on everybody; and it cares little for the royalists, whose present quarrel is with you. If they commit in their turn the same crimes that your own party committed, if they murder the innocent and massacre prisoners, people will say, — I have heard them say it myself, — that their aim is only to destroy the Terrorists, who set them the example, and that all means are lawful to get rid of the Reign of Terror. And is not that exactly what your party said? Did not you fancy that to purge the Republic you would have to get rid of three fourths of all Frenchmen by the scaffold, by war, by exile, or by poverty, which last slays more than all the rest? Do not be angry at what I say. If I am wrong, set me right. I only repeat what I hear others say; and when they talk thus I know not how to answer them."

I could see that I gave him pain, for he said nothing for

some moments; then suddenly he broke forth in that same tone of anger that I had heard from him at Limoges, during the Reign of Terror.

"Yes," he said, "it is our fate to be judged thus. On our heads will be heaped all the reproaches, all the curses, all the blame for deeds that have disgraced the Revolution. I know it! I know it! We shall be called infamous. We shall be stigmatized as wild beasts, as tyrants, because we hoped to have saved France. Our chastisement has begun. The people for whom we sacrificed everything; for whose sake we even compelled ourselves to disregard our natural scruples, our feelings of pity; for whose glorious cause we sacrificed our sentiments of humanity, our reputation, our very consciences, — now turns against us. The people gives us over to our enemies, and in days to come men will curse our memory, and for our sakes hate the sacred name of the Republic. That's what we have gained by wishing to give men a society founded on a brotherhood of equal rights, and a religion based on reason."

"Yes; all this strikes you with surprise, M. Costejoux, because you with your true manly heart thought thus, as you say, of these things. But for three or four Jacobins who thought as you did there were three or four thousand, perhaps more, who thought of nothing beyond satisfying their long-cherished hatred and jealousy against the nobles. Ah! let me speak. I do not mean such Jacobins as those whom you esteem: *you* know them; you can answer for their sincerity. Maybe the motto of your party was *not* hatred and vengeance, — I cannot tell. But of one thing I am certain; and that is, that could the Revolution have been accomplished without forcing men to hate one another, it would have triumphed. We understood it, we loved it,

we aided it, at first. You might have made it permanent, if you had not countenanced persecutions which alarmed the consciences of the simple and the ignorant. You thought persecution necessary. Well, you made a mistake. And now that you perceive it, you are trying to console yourselves by the reflection that indulgence would have lost everything. You don't know, for you never tried it. It was your severity which ruined your experiment; and you cannot resign yourselves to circumstances, as we can, — we, the poor rural population, who have neither hated nor maltreated anybody."

He strove to reply; but when he was much moved his lips would tremble, as I have seen those of other excitable persons, whose hearts were in the right place. For my part I wanted to say out to him all that I thought and felt, so that if my ideas offended him he might break off our bargain.

"No doubt you would tell me," I continued, "that it was the rage of the people against their oppressors which bore you onward, and impelled you to take vengeance for the sufferings they had so long endured. But I know — for I have heard it frequently deplored among ourselves — that it was the population of Paris, the inhabitants of the great towns, whose influence was all-powerful with you, because you think those who have talents and knowledge always live in cities. You fancy you know the peasants, while you know only the workmen who live in your suburbs and in the outskirts of the towns, — their most disreputable quarter; and even of these, half peasants and half workmen, you know only those who form themselves into mobs. Such knowledge satisfies you. You fancy you can count them when they roar in the streets, exciting one another. You don't see them in their own homes, discussing what they

have done; you don't see how little they understand of what they have been doing. You talk with a few men who seek you because they hope to get something out of you,— some office, some reward; or, what they like best, — for all men are full of vanity, — your permission to exercise authority over others. I have seen that myself. I saw at Châteauroux how they ran after the Representatives that came down from Paris; and Dumont heard how those same beggars and sycophants talked about those they fawned upon in the streets and among themselves. All that court paid to the masters of the Republic was to get something out of them; had it been an archbishop or a prince in other times, it would have been the same thing. You, who have a hundredfold more ability than we have, were yourself the dupe of such low schemers, whom you admitted, not without disgust, to your own table, and whom you put up with because they said: 'I can answer for my street, my faubourg, or my corporation.' They deceived you, that they might enhance their own consequence and be considered necessary. They had no influence, as you found out yourself when, indignant at their baseness and their dishonesty, you resolved to punish them in order to satisfy your own sense of what was right, and to allay the general indignation. This was your misfortune, M. Costejoux, and the misfortune of your party. You fancied you knew the people, when you knew only the worst part of the people, — the worst and the most terrible. You knew nothing but the scum; and you fancied that the people, like that scum, were fierce and thirsting for vengeance. You worked to please the bad, and you braved the blame of the good. You thought the better ones were cowards, and not patriots, because they would not wear the *bonnet rouge*, say *thee* and *thou* familiarly, and fawn upon you. I tell

you that those moderates whom you despised were better patriots than all the rest, because they put up with you Jacobins that they might do nothing that would hinder the defence of their invaded country. Don't you see that what politicians ought to know and pay attention to is what the people say among themselves in whispers; and that that is what you never will know while you live in the midst of the orations of the clubs and the howls of the populace of the cities? When you learn it, it is too late. The howlers and the evil-doers of the opposite party have now taken your place; and the people, sad and silent, have abandoned you to the anger of your enemies. Now, indeed, when you count heads, you learn how very many are against you, and you are utterly surprised. You exclaim that the people are ungrateful and cowardly. Well, I am one of the people; and I, who love you, and who owe you Emilien's life, —which is far more precious than my own, — tell you that you have gone astray in a forest where darkness has come suddenly upon you, and where you have wandered into a thicket of thorns, mistaking the right road. Before getting out of it you have had to fight a pack of wolves; and you come out of the wood astonished to find that instead of going forward you have been going backward, that others confound you with wild beasts, and that men are making ready to shoot you down. Just now the royalists have their turn. Possibly they may be more cruel than you, — I cannot say; but they will certainly do no worse than you have done. They will have their own flatterers, their own schemers, their own murderers, and their own rascally followers, who will deceive them as you have been deceived; and they, like you, will in their turn lose their game. Who will win it? Probably the first comer who brings civil war to a close, and lets every man

live in his own house without a continual dread of being denounced, imprisoned, and guillotined within twenty-four hours. It is not because this nation is either royalist or Girondist, selfish or cowardly; not even because it has need of rest, that this will happen. The army has never suffered for want of brave soldiers, because, as regards defence, duty is clear and the cause good. What the people are tired of is the necessity of mistrusting and hating one another, and of seeing the innocent perish without the possibility of saving them. They are weary, too, of having no work. The peasant finds idleness more fatiguing than employment; and all you may give him in the way of help, charity, and compensation is but a poor exchange for his unoccupied time. He has courage and kindliness, which you have never known how to turn to account. Pick him to pieces, and you may find he has many faults; but speaking to you as he would speak, I say that if you could gather together in one pile all the morality, more or less, from every peasant's heart, you would see such a mountain of good sense and good feeling as would frighten you, because up to this time you have never discerned it, and because you would feel at once that it can never be overthrown by anything you do."

I spoke excitedly, walking up and down the room, mending the fire with the tongs, picking up my sewing and laying it down again. I had gone further than I had intended, and I refrained from looking at M. Costejoux lest I should lose courage before I came to the end of what I had to say. Maybe I could have said more; but he had listened to enough. He rose, took me by the arm so roughly as to hurt me, and said, —

"Be silent, peasant! Don't you see that your words are killing me?"

XXIII.

"It is not you that I should like to slay," I said. "I love you and esteem you far too much for that; but I would gladly slay the false ideas which have taken possession of you."

"Those false ideas are patriotism, liberty, and justice!"

"Not at all. Your grand idea is that the end justifies the means."

He went to the end of the room and sat down. He would not own himself conquered. He sat silent and thoughtful. Then he came back to me and said, —

"Do you love Franqueville passionately?"

"I don't know exactly what you mean by *passionately*. I love him better than I do myself. That is all I know."

"And you could not love any one else, — myself for example?"

I was so amazed that I made no reply.

"Don't be surprised," he resumed. "I want to marry, to leave France, to give up politics. I owe nothing to Louise except the restitution of her father's château. She can divide the remnant of the fortune this will give her with Emilien. They will once more become lords of those peasants who only ask to be serfs. Don't let us talk about it! I am disgusted with them, with the populations of the towns, with everything. I hate the nobles; you ought to hate them too, for Emilien neither can nor will marry you if monarchy is re-established. I am by birth no more an

aristocrat than yourself. My fortune I owe to the toil of my father and my own. Do not shrink from me. I am not in love with you, Nanette. If I followed my inclination I should be the lover of Louise. But I know that she is only a woman, and in you I see a superior mind, a character worthy of admiration. You are handsome enough to inspire any man with a desire to possess you; and if you would but hold out any encouragement I should easily forget I could have loved any woman but you. Stay! Reflect, Nanon. Night brings good counsel. You would be more useful to Emilien by becoming my wife than by hoping to become his. You know how much I love him. Together we might smooth his path in life. I should be willing to have you look upon him as a brother. I would not be jealous: how could I be of uprightness incarnate? The man who marries Louise will be always uneasy; the man to whom you say *yes* may trust you even as he would trust God. This may show you that you are appreciated as you deserve. Hush! Wait till to-morrow! We will have no more arguments to-night, no recriminations. Decide on your own fate and on mine."

He took his candlestick and went out of the room quickly, without turning to look at me. I remained perfectly bewildered, but not undecided. Even if I could have fancied him, I could see he was madly in love with Louise, and only wanted to marry me in hopes of curing himself of his passion. And supposing he could not, and that I had married him,—how wretched I should have been! M. Costejoux was a man of quick impulses, always ready to follow a sudden notion, and liable to pass from one extreme to another. Assuredly he deserved any woman's devotion; but a woman he did not love would have run a great risk of making him unhappy as well as herself. So his pro-

posal in no wise tempted me. Though I knew him to be my superior by reason of his education and his great talents, I also knew him to be weak, and to have an unstable disposition. His bursts of passion did not frighten me, but his habit of worrying would have worried me; and I did not like worry, which is always the outcome of indecision. How much more worthy of my attachment did Franqueville seem to me, with his singleness of heart and his straightforwardness of purpose! There was nothing about him that was not as clear as day, and every one of his words shone into my soul like a gleam of light from on high. Of course he had not the ability to build up a fortune like M. Costejoux. He was satisfied with possessing so little in this world! It was my part to think of this world's things for him, and to let him guide me in far higher matters. Besides, I loved him and him only. I had loved him all my life. I could not even try to love another man, were it only half as well.

The next morning M. Costejoux, who was making ready to depart while I was preparing his breakfast, seeing that I was as calm as usual, and that I did not try to be alone with him, comprehended that I had not changed my mind, and appeared to regret what he had said to me the night before.

"I was very much excited," he said; "you made me unhappy by your ideas, in which there is some truth; but they do not stand upon a sure foundation, for you assume that the situation in which we find ourselves was made and chosen by us, while the truth is that we have to submit to it. In the course of our discussion a little secret which lies deep in my heart escaped me; and the foolish pain it costs me, though it is but a small wound to add to those which seem to rend my soul, led me, I hardly know why,

to say some foolish things to you, which you might ridicule if you were not both wise and generous. May I trust that you will keep them to yourself, and that even Emilien — Emilien especially — will never be told of them?"

"As I had not the smallest notion of prompting you to say such things," I replied, "and as you said them entirely without reflection, I do not feel myself called upon to tell him anything; and you may feel sure I shall forget them just as quickly as you imagined them."

"Thank you, Nanette. I trust your promise. A day may come when I may ask Franqueville for his sister's hand. If you should have told him anything concerning my irresolution, it might set him against me. He is more serious than I am, because he is simple-minded. He would not understand me."

"Very true; so let all such irresolution be dead and buried, M. Costejoux. If you really love Louise, you will soon correct those little whims which you encourage in her too much, as you yourself acknowledge. Make her love you: a woman always thinks a man whom she loves must be right, and submits to him. And now, my dear sir, turn your attention to our late agreement. If it does not satisfy you entirely — "

"It does satisfy me; it is settled: I shall never regret it. Believe me, Nanette, I am more than ever your friend, and proud to be so."

He shook me cordially by the hand; and the Prior having come in and taken his seat at table talked freely, and with a sort of mock resignation, of things which were taking place at Paris, — things which appeared to us very surprising. He told us that while we in the country were all shaken and broken, as it were, by emotions caused by late events, by the privations and sufferings of the present,

and by apprehensions for the future, the gay world in Paris was almost beside itself with eagerness for amusement. He told us about the parties given by Madame Tallien and Madame Beauharnais; about the Greek costumes worn by those ladies; about what were called "Bals des Victimes," — where it was proper to bow with a gesture that gave the idea of the head falling off, where every one danced in white robes and black sashes, where hair was cut short, dressed *à la guillotine*, — balls to which no one was admitted unless one of his near relatives had been guillotined. All this struck me as so atrocious and so grewsome that it frightened me, and I dreamed about it the night after. I could have understood how royalists might have met together round some imitation of funeral rites, and with tears in common have sworn vengeance; but to dance over the graves of friends and relatives was delirium, and Paris in its gayety impressed my mind with fear and dread more than Paris crowding round the scaffold.

While all these horrible rejoicings went on in the cynical gay world, our poor devoted armies were taking Holland. Early in February, 1795, I had a letter from Emilien: —

"To-day, January 20, we entered Amsterdam, without shoes, without clothing, hiding our nakedness with wisps of straw, but in good order, with our bands playing. They had not expected us so soon, and nothing was ready for us. We had to wait six hours in the snow before they could give us bread to eat or find us quarters. Not a murmur was heard from our heroic soldiers; and those whom they had conquered gazed at them with admiration. Ah, my love, it is a proud thing to command such men, and to belong to this army in which the heart and soul of France, led astray and sorely wounded, has found refuge; here patriotism exists pure and sublime, free from all thoughts of self, animated by love of the Republic and of our

native country! How happy I am in loving you, and in feeling myself worthy of you after such unheard-of sufferings as we have accepted willingly! Do not pity your friend: be happy, as he is; and be sure that as soon as peace is made he will hasten to find his reward in your dear arms. Tell Father Dumont that I love him, and Mariotte that I send her a kiss. Tell our dear Prior that I have thought often and often of his words in times of trial. When I suffered cold, hunger, and fatigue I said to myself, 'Evil has been done, and that evil is the cause of all our woes. What we have now to do is to force good to grow up again. To that end we must suffer; and the soldier is the sacrifice of expiation, who will reconcile France with Heaven.'"

In a postscript he added: —

"I had almost forgotten to tell you that I was made a captain, on the field of battle, after the fight at Dueren."

The Prior, Dumont, Mariotte, and I all gathered round this precious letter, weeping both for grief and pleasure. Emilien did not say when he would come home. We knew not but that he would soon be again struggling with fresh sufferings and fresh dangers; but he wished us to feel satisfied and to be proud of his martyrdom; and we tried to forget what grieved us, and to be joyful in his joy.

As spring approached, the Prior — who, thanks to our care, had safely got through the severe winter — grew suddenly worse. I hardly ever left him, which interfered with my overseeing the management of the land and with my other occupations; but I felt that I would rather give up everything than not be with him. His sickness was attended with despondency; he did not feel ill; he kept up his appetite, and he would have got better had he had strength to breathe. The oppression on his chest caused him great discomfort and melancholy. Only I could comfort him.

One day when he was feeling better he persuaded me to go out for a walk. I took advantage of the opportunity to visit a sick woman in whom I was interested, and who lived at some distance. I paid my visit, and started home at good speed; but the days were short at that season. I had left the Monastery at noon, but it was growing dusk when I entered the woods on my return, and as there were wolves about I was glad to hear voices and steps a little in advance of me upon a road which crossed the Forest, while I intended to make a short cut toward the open. I however decided to take the longer way, and to keep near these men for fear of wild beasts. They were not apparently from our neighborhood; and as I was not of an age to walk by night in the company of strange men, I followed them by stealth, and moved quietly.

I was, however, near enough to hear their voices, and I thought I caught the words "Prior" — "Monastery of Valcreux" — "Midnight."

I began to feel uneasy. I hastened forward, and got near enough to distinguish exactly what they said.

They had stopped, and as far as I could judge by their voices — for the darkness would not let me see distinctly through the branches — there were only three of them. I found out that they were expecting more. Others came up shortly after, and a little later, more; then they counted their numbers in whispers, giving to one another nick-names, which made me certain that they were all leagued into one band, — "Trompe la Mort," "Gargousse," "Franc-Limier," etc.[1] Their conversation, too, was carried on partly in *argot*, — that is, in the thieves' language.

[1] Cheat-death; Cartridge; Volunteer-spy. — TRANS.

I understood, however, what they said, or probably I guessed it. They were a wandering band of evil-doers, who, under pretext of being royalists, made their way into châteaux and farms at night, and tortured those they found there till they obtained their money.[1] A great deal had been said about them in our neighborhood, and everybody was afraid of them. Frightful cruelties were said to have been committed by them, as well as the boldest kind of robberies. We had heard so often — year after year — that the brigands were coming, that I had never believed these stories. Now I saw the danger near at hand, and felt how great it was.

There were seven of them, and they did not judge themselves strong enough to attack the Abbey of Beaulieu, which had become a flourishing farm with many inhabitants. At Valcreux, they said, there was no one but an old Prior, two laborers, and two women. They had got good information; but as they did not include Dumont, I saw that there was nobody among them belonging to our village. I was glad of that.

To get possession of the Monastery, they concluded, would not be difficult; but was there anything in it worth the trouble? They did not know if the Prior had put by anything, and the Republic had taken all the money of the Community. The only pleasure they could count upon was that of laying waste the property of Costejoux the Jacobin.

One of them, however, insisted that the Prior must have money. He said that those old monks were more than a match for the Republic, and had always found means to keep something back for themselves. It seemed

[1] Apparently a branch of the chauffeurs, then common on the northeastern frontier of France. — TRANS.

that he made no more account of monks than he did of Jacobins.

This last opinion carried the day, and they began to plan how they should get in. Two men were during the evening to present themselves at the gate of the Monastery as beggars, and ask leave to sleep in the barn; at midnight they were to open the gates to others. They seemed to know that the breaches in the walls had been repaired, and that it would not be easy to get over them. Meantime the rascals talked of supping with the Forester, who was one of themselves, a sort of accomplice and receiver of stolen goods.

I felt that I had no time to lose if I meant to defeat their kind intentions. I was leaving my hiding-place and beginning to get away, when I struck my foot against the root of a tree in the darkness, and made a sudden noise. Instantly all were silent, and I heard the click of their guns. I lay down motionless. They searched all around and about me. I thought my last hour had come, for they were not likely to spare any one who had found out their secrets. Happily they did not discover me, and came to the conclusion that it was only a dead branch falling from a tree. I made use of the noise they were themselves making, to hurry away. But having to make a short cut through the bushes, since all the paths I could take might lead me back to the cross-roads where the thieves were hiding, I lost my way, and went wandering about for half an hour, dreading that I might have made a circle and so come back upon their rendezvous.

At last, after having knocked up against trees, and torn myself with briars, I found myself at the edge of the wood, and hurried across the moor until I reached the high-road to Valcreux. I got there, bathed in perspira-

tion, notwithstanding the extreme cold, and so out of breath that I could hardly speak. The first thing to be done was to hasten to our old mayor, who three days before had been re-elected, and to tell him my adventure. He knew I was not timid nor imaginary, and forthwith he sent the *garde champêtre* to get the villagers together, and to tell them of the threatened danger to the Monastery. We had no able-bodied men in the village, all our young men were in the army; but the old ones were not deficient in courage, and when they knew that the brigands were only seven, they made up their minds to arrest them, — for more than one person of bad character in the neighborhood was suspected of belonging to the band, and our peasants were more bitter against their own ruffians than against strangers.

They got what arms they could. They had a few old muskets, which had escaped requisition; and there were the famous pikes and halberds taken from the Monastery seven years before, which now served to arm the National Guard of the village. They told me that I had better let the false beggars get in when they applied for a night's lodging, and even let them open the gates at midnight. It was settled that twenty of our men should hide themselves in the little hollow near the Fountain of Miracles; and that twelve others should be hidden beforehand in the Monastery chapel, so as to take the band in front and rear.

I hastened home to warn the Prior, and I begged him to keep quiet in his chamber, guarded by Dumont and Mariotte. The latter hid a spit behind the door, resolved to use it as her weapon if necessary. Our two workmen sat up in the kitchen, and I went back to the great gates to receive the beggars, who came, as I expected, and I let them in without showing any mistrust of their intentions.

I asked if they were hungry. They said no, but that they had walked a long way, and wanted a corner to sleep in. I took them to the place that I intended for them, and they flung themselves down on a pile of dry heather, like men who were very weary. Next I had to see that our friends got into the chapel without noise, one at a time. But in spite of all I could do or say I could not prevent their talking in whispers, and I perceived that the two bandits were not asleep. They were restless, and went out into the yard to see what was going on. It was eleven o'clock when all our preparations were finished, and we were surprised to hear the owls in the tower of the donjon make more noise than usual. I listened attentively, and then I said to our men, —

"Those are not the cries of our owls. Our owls know it themselves, and are not answering them. They come from the two bandits, who have climbed on to the top of the barn, and are warning their comrades to keep away, as the Monastery is prepared for them. I shall be surprised if they do not attempt presently to get out of the Monastery."

"If so," they said, "we must watch them, seize them, and arrest them."

This was easily done, for the men made no resistance; they felt it best to make believe that they had no idea what we could accuse them of. They were put into the dungeon of the Monastery, where nobody could hear them; and, indeed, they made no further attempt to warn their accomplices.

This took about an hour; and at midnight every man was at his post. We opened the gates half-way, and for ten whole minutes nobody moved or said one word. I was up in the watch-tower over the old gate ready to

throw stones down on the assailants; for I expected to take my little share in the fight, not caring to expose my friends *sans payer aussi de ma personne.*

All of a sudden I smelled a smell of burning, and looking through the grating into the courtyard I saw smoke coming from the barn. The two bandits, either from neglect or by design, had set fire to the place before leaving it. I had just time to give warning to the party in the chapel. They put the fire out quickly; and those who were lying in wait near the Fountain came round by the entrance to the Monastery, no longer expecting to take the band by surprise. Indeed, all this prevented their coming. But they sent out two scouts on horseback, who, as soon as they were pursued, started off at a tremendous gallop and disappeared in the darkness. They were well mounted, and we were all on foot; so we could neither catch them nor identify them. Our friends mounted guard at the Monastery for several nights after, which was quite unnecessary. The bandits had taken warning, and never came back again; indeed, they disappeared from the neighborhood. Our two prisoners were taken to Chambon, where they were examined. One denied everything, and said that if he had set fire to our barn with his pipe he did not know that he had done it, and could say nothing more about it. The other one made believe he was an idiot, and would answer no questions. They had knives on their persons like long daggers. There was no further evidence against them. They were kept some time in prison, in hopes it might be found out who they were. Nothing was discovered, however, and all that could be done was to sentence them as tramps and vagabonds to several months' imprisonment at Limoges.

XXIV.

I KNEW nothing of these things until long after; for this scare, so happily baffled, had sad results of another kind.

Notwithstanding all we had done to reassure the Prior, he had been frightfully alarmed; and the next day he had high fever and delirium. I sat up with him three nights, though I felt very ill myself, without knowing why or wherefore; for I had only been much frightened when I came so near being detected listening in ambush among the trees, and afterward when I was afraid that I might not get home in time to defeat the projects of the brigands. I had had such quantities of things to think of afterward, that I had had no chance to feel afraid or to give way to fatigue. I had done everything I could, after the bandits left us, to set meat and drink before those who had come so kindly to the defence of the Monastery. They ate up all my cheeses, they drank lots of plum wine, and they sang till daylight in the great refectory, ending their warlike experience as peasants always like to do, — by a carouse.

I hoped that their village songs, so soft and gay, would please the Prior if he heard them, and take away his apprehensions. But it was not so; he persisted in believing that the brigands were making merry in our halls, and that they would come and torture him to get his money.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" I said, not knowing how else to calm him; "even if they did get in and carry off everything, they would not put us to the torture. It would be very easy to give them all we have in the house; and I cannot understand why you should worry yourself so much about your poor little purse, which cannot contain enough to torture you for."

"My purse!" he cried, starting up in his bed; "never! never! All I have — my money! I care for it more than for my life! No, never! I would die in torments rather than tell them where it is! Get ready the stake, — here I am! Burn me! cut me into little pieces! Do what you like, wretches, I am ready; but I 'll never tell you!"

He grew calmer when day broke; but at night he began again: he screamed, he raved, and he protested. The doctor thought him very ill; and the night after he was worse. I did everything I could to calm him; he would not listen to what I said, nor did he recognize me. The doctor told me to lie down and rest; that I looked very ill, and that he thought I was so.

"I am not ill," I replied; "don't think of anybody but the poor Prior."

But as I spoke I fell down suddenly, insensible; and they carried me into my own chamber. I knew nothing more. I had no strength, no remembrance, no solicitude. All I wanted was to sleep, — to sleep, to sleep, and sleep again. I did not suffer unless they examined or questioned me; then they disturbed me cruelly. I could not bear to be roused. I was a week in this state. I had inflammation of the lungs, that was all; but I was very ill, and they had lost all hope of me, when I recovered consciousness as suddenly as I had lost it.

I had much difficulty at first in remembering what had

happened. In my delirium I had fancied that the Prior was dead; I was sure I had seen him buried. Then it was Emilien; then it was myself. At last I managed to question Dumont, whom I recognized beside my bed.

"You will do now!" he said.

"And the rest?"

"They are all well."

"Emilien?"

"We have good news from him. Peace is signed."

"The Prior?"

"Better, better, — very much better!"

"Mariotte?"

"She is just outside."

"Ah, yes, — but who is taking care of —"

"The Prior? Oh, he is all right. I am going back to him. Go to sleep, Nanon. Don't worry about anything."

I went to sleep again, and from that moment I got better. My illness had not lasted long enough to weaken me greatly. I was soon able to sit up in an easy-chair, and I wanted to see the Prior; but they would not let me.

"Since he is getting on so well," I said to Dumont, "why does n't he come and see me?"

"The doctor said that you were not to talk. Have patience for a day or two longer. You owe it to your friends, who have been so anxious about you."

I submitted; but the next day, finding I could walk around my own chamber without fatigue, I went to my window, and looked over at that of the Prior. It was closed, which was quite contrary to his usual habits, for being asthmatic he hardly allowed it to be shut even at night and in the coldest weather.

"Dumont!" I cried, "you are deceiving me! The Prior —"

"Why will you worry yourself," he said, "and run the risk of being ill again? It is not right. You promised me to wait."

I sat down again in my chair, and I concealed my anguish. Dumont, to make me believe he was going back to his other patient, left me alone with Mariotte. I did not choose to question her. As it was time for me to eat, she left me to make my soup ready. Then finding myself alone, and not being able to bear the suspense, I crept out of my chamber, and supporting myself by my hands along the walls I reached the room of the Prior, which was at the end of the small cloister. It was open. The bed-curtains were down, the mattresses were turned back; the room had been cleaned and set in order; the great leathern arm-chair was turned round and set against the wall; the Prior's clothes were in the closets, and a faint smell of incense still lingered in the room. All told me the sad truth. I remembered that from the next chamber, which had been Emilien's, I could see the cemetery. I stole into it. I looked out of the window. I saw near the cemetery gate a new-made grave, with a cross of white wood on which nothing had yet been written, and from an arm of the cross hung a large wreath of faded greenery.

That was all that remained of my dear patient, whom I had so long protected when Death threatened him! While I was engaged in my own struggle with our common enemy, Death had taken him! And I had known nothing of it, — unless, indeed, my fevered dream had been a kind of vision.

I went back to my room feeble and heart-broken; and I had a relapse, but not a bad one. When I could weep I felt better, but my heart ached to think that I had missed the Prior's last farewell and final benediction.

When I was well again they decided to tell me all about his death. He sank after having got apparently better, and his last hours were very calm.

This blow fell when I was at my worst. He had constantly asked for me; they would not tell him how ill I was, but they had to let him know that I was sick in bed. Then he called Dumont, and gave him his last directions.

"And now," continued Dumont, "if you feel yourself able to bear a new excitement, which I know will only add to your grief, listen to me. The Prior, whom you always believed poor, and whom you provided for by the work of your own hands that he might never be obliged to spend anything, knowing how he hated to part with his money, was worth twenty-five thousand francs, which I brought him from Quéret his native place, whither he sent me four years ago to get what belonged to him. I promised to keep his secret, and I have done so. I knew too what he meant to do with it; and when he was so afraid of the bandits, I knew that it was not for himself he feared. It was for you, Nanette, — *you* are his heiress; and now you are rich, thanks to him, and are a good match for Emilien, whom you will not now refuse. 'Those children saved me,' said the Prior; 'they drew me out of the dungeon where I left my health behind, and but for them I should have left my life there. Now that life is leaving me, don't let the priests come here to worry me. I know as much as they do. I always confess straight to God, — to that God in whom I believe; whereas many of *them* don't believe in Him at all. I hope to die in peace with Him; and if I have been guilty of bad actions in my lifetime, I will try to make up for them with one good one at the last. I shall make the fortune of two young persons who have loved me, nursed me, comforted me, and kept me alive as

long as they could, — especially Nanette. She has been an angel to me, — a real guardian angel. She has made great sacrifices for me too; she well deserves all I can do for her. She is my sole heiress, for I know well enough who she loves and who she will marry. She has an excellent head for business; she will make good use of my money. As soon as you have closed my eyes, take my portfolio from under my pillow. It contains a cheque, payable at sight, for the sum I told you of, which is deposited with M. Costejoux's half-brother, the banker at Limoges. My will, which I made the day you brought me the money, has been placed long since in the hands of M. Costejoux, though he does not know what it contains. You must take Nanette to him, and he will put her into possession of her fortune.'

"I remarked to the Prior," continued Dumont, "that he had a family, to whom he might do wrong by this disposal of his property. He replied that that matter was all right; that his brothers and sisters having shared his patrimony among them during the forty years he passed in the Convent, had offered very honestly to return him what they had spent, as well as his original share, and that he had declined the restitution on condition that they would let him will his patrimony as he pleased. He has had a paper drawn up about this in due form; and the high character of his relatives is a further guarantee that they will not try to break their engagement. All these papers the Prior said that I should find — and I have found them — in his portfolio. I did not wait for your recovery before writing to M. Costejoux. He says he will be here this evening, to put you in possession of your property, and complete all the legal formalities of your inheritance. He will ask you how you wish to invest your capital, and you will have to answer him."

"My poor Dumont," I said, "I have no head left for business as you see. I can do nothing but cry. I can only think of that poor dear man who is gone, and whom I could not even thank for his goodness to me."

"You can thank him in your prayers," replied Dumont. He had dropped the old *thou* with which he had always hitherto addressed me, as not being sufficiently respectful to Emilien's future wife. "I never have been a very religious man myself," he added, "but I do think that departed souls can hear us; and in the night I sometimes fancy I am talking to the dear old Prior, and that he answers me."

"That is how I feel, Dumont. I seem to see and hear him all the time, and my hope is that he sees and hears me. I hope he knows that it was not my fault that I was not beside him when he died, and that he sees my tears, and knows how much I love him, and how much rather I would have kept him here than be rich, as he has made me."

"I am certain," said Dumont, "that it made him very happy to provide for his dear children. He kissed me just an hour before he closed his eyes in his last sleep, and said, 'This is my blessing for Nanette and Emilien.'"

As every word Dumont said made me cry, he was afraid of making me ill again, and took me out into the garden. The weather was getting fine, and we soon saw M. Costejoux arrive, who made me take his arm to get back to the house, and showed great interest in me. He brought me the will, and all the papers that put me in possession of my twenty-five thousand francs ([illegible]).

When I was able to talk business I replied to his questions, that I wanted to pay him at once for the property I had bought from him.

"You will make a mistake if you do," he said. "Your money in my half-brother's hands brings you six per cent. You had better continue to pay me two per cent, and use the surplus interest of your twenty-five thousand francs in buying more land."

"I will do just as you tell me," I answered. "I have no strength left for any will of my own."

"Oh, that won't last," he said; "and you will see then that I have given you good advice. With your economy and industry you will pay me without feeling it, while all the time you will be rounding your domain by degrees, and in twenty years it will have trebled its present value. You see, the interest every year grows less as the debt grows smaller. We will talk that over to-morrow. Now let us talk about Emilien. Do you intend to tell him about this legacy?"

"No, no, M. Costejoux! I would rather have him take me poor. Who knows but what in his turn he might be having scruples?"

"No, I am certain he never would. I know him too well. His soul lives in a region above material things. Money has little value in his eyes. He is a sort of saint, like those in early Christian ages. But luckily you are practical, and you will have to be so for both of you. Marry him, and take charge of all his worldly affairs. That is the way to make him happy."

I insisted however that Emilien should not be told. I thought I should like to surprise him on his return; for I knew well enough that though he did not care for money he loved the old Monastery, and would be greatly pleased to have it for his home. It was therefore agreed that he should only be told of the Prior's death, and of the tender benediction that friend had sent him in his last moments.

M. Costejoux seeing me much altered by grief and sickness, begged me to come and visit Louise at Franqueville.

"It is only a few hours' journey," he said, "which in a carriage will do you good, and give you a change of air. Besides, you owe it to your friend to see with your own eyes what care we take of his sister, and to rejoice over her perfect health. You have not been able to do so hitherto, and it is the first use you ought to make of your liberty."

I agreed to spend twenty-four hours at Franqueville. I took Dumont with me in order to spare M. Costejoux the trouble of bringing me back, and we started the next morning.

As we went, M. Costejoux spoke much of Louise; indeed, he talked of nothing else. I saw that he was more and more in love with her, and that he hoped to make her accept his homely name, notwithstanding the wry faces she made at such a notion. I asked him if she knew Emilien's plans with regard to me.

"No," he replied, "she does not even suspect them. You will judge if it be best to prepare her for what is coming."

I owned to M. Costejoux that I greatly dreaded the contempt and disapproval of Louise.

"No," he said, "she is no longer the cross and sickly child you knew her. She understands that one must yield to circumstances, and she *does* submit. Her hatred for the Revolution is mere playfulness, mere teasing, — I am almost tempted to say mere coquetry, put on when I am present."

"Tell me more plainly."

"Well, this is how it is, — Louise likes me to love her, but always seems to tell me that I must pay for the pleasure of her regard by yieldlng to her caprices. For some

time past, however, we have not talked politics. I shall not be sorry to see how she will take your marriage with her brother. However, we will say nothing about it if you would rather she did not know."

"Let me judge; if I see fit I will tell her," I replied. "I want to see how she will receive me."

As we drew near Franqueville I was much moved by seeing for the first time the place where my poor Emilien had passed his boyhood. I leaned out of the carriage window to look at everything and everybody. It was a land of hills and deep valleys very much like ours. The valley in which the château stood was however broader and less uncultivated than that of the Monastery. The land seemed more rich, the inhabitants better off, but more full of self-assertion and less amiable.

"They are not easy to get along with," said M. Costejoux. "They are more absorbed in politics than your villagers, and understand them less; they have not half the good sense of your people, and honesty is not their leading virtue. The fault is not theirs: it is the bad influence of a big château and contact with its servants. The late Marquis took no interest in the laborers on his estate, — he was much more familiar with his wolves and his wild boars; his peasants were of less importance to him than his hounds. The brief visits that he made to this place were mere hunting expeditions; yet little as they loved their lord his peasants were always glad to see him, because then there was money to be made by supplying his table and providing for his amusements. Nothing demoralizes a peasant so much as to make money out of his servility. But here we are! Don't judge of the place by its outward appearance. Except a few turrets and weathercocks bearing the family arms that we have taken down,

it still looks handsome outside; but inside it was pillaged and destroyed in 1789 by those good peasants who now find fault with us for having defaced the coats-of-arms and taken the family coronets off the pigeon cotes."

And in truth the look of the vestibule was forlorn enough. We had to step over actual ruins to get into the great drawing-room, which was still intact, though it had neither doors nor window-panes. The sashes of the windows had been broken; yards of rich tapestry torn from the walls hung down in tatters; the immense chimney-piece had all its carvings mutilated, as had the gilded mouldings of the ceiling; and fragments of picture-frames, broken mirrors, scraps and rags of all sorts showed that what the peasants could not carry off they had destroyed.

"And now they are dissatisfied with the Revolution!" I thought. "It seems to me that they did their best to profit by it."

M. Costejoux conducted me up a little staircase to a tower, which had been less injured than the rest, and where he had fixed up some rooms very pretty and bright for his mother and Louise. There Madame Costejoux received us with much grace and kindness. She knew my story, and that of Dumont, whom she welcomed cordially, calling him "Citizen," and asking him to sit down. But Dumont, as soon as he had put down my bundle and offered a basket of our best fruits which I had selected for their acceptance, withdrew discreetly.

"I hope you will dine with us," said the old lady.

He thanked her in a tone that showed he felt her kindness, but he remembered that he had been a servant in that house, and not one who ate at the first table. The place seemed now to belong in some sort to Mademoiselle de Franqueville, and though he had for months eaten at

the same table with her at the Monastery, he fancied she would not like to repeat this equality at Franqueville. He said he had some old friends to visit in the village, and did not return.

I waited with impatience for Louise.

"She begs you both to excuse her," said Madame Costejoux, "for not coming immediately. She has been in *deshabille* all day, which is very seldom the case. But she has been much upset by receiving some bad news that I had better tell you at once. Her eldest brother, the Marquis de Franqueville, who has been serving against France, died from a wound received in a duel. We have no particulars, but the fact is certain; and Louise, though she knows how ill her brother behaved, has been very much affected, as was natural."

"So, now," cried M. Costejoux, looking at me, "Emilien is the head of the house, and complete master of his own actions: he can do anything he pleases; nobody can blame him or thwart his wishes. He has no relatives now but very distant ones, who never had anything to do with him, and never need have."

"Ah, but he has Louise!" I thought, looking down. "Perhaps she may make more opposition than an entire family."

XXV.

She came down at last, dressed all in black, and beautiful as an angel. Her first act was to give her hand to M. Costejoux, saying, —

"Ah, do you know the new bereavement that has come to me?"

He kissed her hand in answer, saying, —

"We will try all the more to make up to you for those you have lost."

She thanked him with a sweet sad smile, and then came up to me, — gracious and kind, but not tender or spontaneous.

"My good Nanette," she said, offering me her beautiful forehead to kiss, "kiss me, I beg of you. It gives me great pleasure to see you here. I want so much to thank you for all you have done for my brother. I know how you have saved his life a hundred times over, hiding him and risking your own. Ah, we who are persecuted are fortunate to find such true devotion left in France! And Dumont too, — for Dumont did as much as you, it seems?"

"Certainly he did," I replied. "But for M. Costejoux first, and Dumont afterwards, I might not have been able to do anything after all."

"And how is the poor fellow? Are we not to see him too?"

"Certainly," said M. Costejoux. "But dinner is ready, and our guest must be hungry."

He offered his arm to Louise, and we went down to the dining-room, which was on a floor below. Dinner lasted some time, though there were two men-servants; but M. Costejoux liked to linger long at table when he was with his family. It had to make up, he said, for all the days he ate alone, or standing, or working at his writing-table.

The dinner was served with an elegance that struck me much, for it was the first time I had ever dined at a gentleman's table; and M. Costejoux was rich enough to make a show, even while living as he did at Franqueville. His mother was an excellent housekeeper, who looked after everything carefully and quietly, and who was anxious that her son and his ward should never want for anything that was comfortable or proper in their position. M. Costejoux seemed to care little for himself, but to be much pleased when Louise seemed satisfied with his hospitality. Though he did not seem to watch her, he never lost sight of anything she did; he anticipated her smallest wishes, and hastened to supply her wants without giving her the trouble of asking for anything. He was to her what I was to Emilien whenever I had the happiness of waiting on him. All I saw astonished me, though I was sharp enough not to appear foolishly amazed at it. But what struck me the most was to find Louise so changed. I had left her an ailing child, sallow and rickety, morally retarded in her growth by a life of poverty and disappointment. I found her a beautiful young lady, who had bloomed into womanhood in comfort and security. She had grown a head at least since I last saw her. She was tall and slender instead of short and thick, as she had promised to be. She was still pale, but so fair and with a skin so clear and white that she seemed like a lily. Her hands, polished as ivory, seemed to me something to

wonder at. They seemed as if they never had been intended for anything but to be kissed and looked at. I remembered how I had taken the best care I could of them, because she had been so anxious to keep them clean and free from scratches; but I had had no gloves to give her, and I had never fancied hands could have been brought to such a point of perfection.

She saw my admiration, and leaning toward me she slipped her arm around my neck very prettily, putting her cheek caressingly against mine; but she did not touch me with her lips, which I did not fail to observe. I recollected that she had never given me a kiss, even when on her best behavior or most anxious to coax me. M. Costejoux did not know that. He thought she was lovely to me, and said, —

"Is she not altered?"

"She is wonderfully handsomer," I replied.

"And you, too," she said, looking at me as if this were for the first time; "do you know that I should hardly have known you, Nanette? You are a really good-looking girl. Your sickness has refined you, and your hands would be better hands than mine if you took care of them."

"Take care of *my* hands!" I exclaimed, laughing.

I stopped, fearing to put a reproach into my comparison; but she guessed what I was thinking of, and said very sweetly, —

"Oh, I know you always take care of everything but what is your own, and that I am a person spoiled by the charity of other people to such an extent that I am supposed to think their kindness is my due. But I am far from forgetting my own position; I am, indeed."

"And what is that position?" cried M. Costejoux, with

tender anxiety. "Tell us; confess, — since to-day seems a day of sadness, and your heart is open. Say some harm about yourself; that is your way of getting petted, you know."

"Shall I make my confession?" she said. "Then hear me. I am sure of maternal absolution from my aunt," — that was what she called Madame Costejoux, — "and as for you, there never was a more indulgent papa. Nanon is a child-spoiler of the first order. I know all about her ways. Did n't I use to worry her by my humors and caprices? I was horrid to you, Nanon. I was hateful; and you were patient as an angel, and used to say: 'It is not her fault, poor thing; she has been so badly treated, — she will do better by-and-by.' You would not let Emilien scold me; you tried to persuade the poor Prior that he ought to think all my pranks were amusing. But they did not amuse him in the least; they only made him feel badly. I made every one unhappy; and if my other childish remembrances seem like a nightmare, my residence at the Monastery is a remorse."

"Don't talk so," I said; "you pain me. I would have gladly suffered far more for your sake; one never can regret suffering for those one loves."

"I know you think so. Love is your religion. Why is it not mine in the same degree? I should be happy if it were; because then I could pay something back to those who overwhelm me with their kindness. It is my shame and my sorrow not to do so now. I am like a broken plant that cannot take root again, however good the soil. My mind and my heart languish. I do not understand my own position. I am always asking myself why people take pity on me; why they try to bring me back to happiness, when all those I belong to are exiled

or destroyed. Why was I not suffered just to glimmer and go out, like so many other victims more interesting than I?"

While she said all these sad things with a strange smile, and eyes that did not fix themselves on any of us, M. Costejoux turned half round upon his chair, and was looking at the fire as it crackled in the chimney. He seemed plunged in meditation, partly sad and partly agreeable. His mother looked at Louise with extreme anxiety. She evidently feared she should hear her say next that she never should love M. Costejoux.

But he did not think that himself; he took things cheerfully.

"So," said he; "you are sad because you are loved, but do not love in return. That would be unfortunate, if true; but it is hard to believe, for if you did not love at all you would have no concern for the pain you give to others."

She looked at him earnestly; and then, as if she had not heard him, turned to me.

"You love to excess," she said; "yours is the opposite trouble to mine. Indeed, my brother must be very grateful to you; perhaps he is in love with you. But what will be your fate in the future?"

M. Costejoux was impetuous. He could not bear this speech, which made my cheeks pale, and which confused me. He forgot the promise he had made, and came out with, —

"Her future will be to be adored by her husband. Every one is not wanting in sense and feeling."

Louise blushed with mortification.

"It is possible," she said, "that my brother may have at one time formed the generous project of espousing her

who saved his life; but now that he is the Marquis de Franqueville, M. Costejoux, he has become head of his house — "

"Consequently he can shape his own future, Mademoiselle de Franqueville! And if he does not marry the best friend he ever had, he will be unworthy to be a gentleman!"

M. Costejoux was angry. Louise dared not answer him. Madame Costejoux tried to reanimate the conversation, but everybody was hurt, and it fell through.

Dinner being over, the old lady took my arm and led me into her room, which was fitted up as a sort of *salon*. She showed me with some pride how nicely everything was planned. Louise's chamber was next to hers, with a number of mirrors, a pretty toilette set, and little pieces of fancy furniture. It looked like a bric-à-brac depository.

"We are somewhat pressed for space," she said; "but never fear, we will lodge you comfortably. They will put up a bed in my room for you, and you shall sleep beside me. I sleep very quietly, but if you like to talk we will talk. Anything suits me; nothing frets or worries me, provided my dear son is satisfied. I have left him alone on purpose with Louise. When they are alone together he gets on best with her, he talks so well; and she lets herself be charmed by his conversation."

"I know it!" I said. "All he says and all he thinks is right and good. But do you think this would really be for his happiness — "

"Ah, I know — I know!" she said more eagerly than her usual slow speech often allowed her to answer. "I know she has many prejudices, great prejudices, and some little faults. But all that will be altered when she loves him. Don't you think so?"

"I don't know," I replied, "I never had to change."

"So my son told me. You have always loved young Franqueville. He is not like his sister. He has no pride. Perhaps he will try to persuade her to marry my son. What do you think?"

"I think so."

"Has he any influence over her?"

"None whatever."

"And you?"

"Still less."

"What a pity! What a pity!" she said in a sad voice, picking up her knitting.

And she added, as she stuck her knitting-needles through her gray curls, which she wore with a big lace cap of the same form as my *cornette* of starched dimity, —

"Perhaps you are prejudiced against her. She made you angry just now."

"No, Madame. I expected her to say what she did. I am not angry. It is her way of thinking. Besides, you know her better than I do now. Living with you must have changed her very much, — you are so good."

"I am patient, that is all. I know that you are good too, — my son has so often spoken of you. Do you know that — yes, he told you, and he tells me everything — if you had been heart-whole he might have loved you? He would have forgotten this fascinating Louise, he would have been happier, and I should have been happier too in consequence. She will cause us many an anxious moment yet, — I am sure of it. But God's will be done! I only trust that she will not part me from my son, — it would kill me! You see he is the only one left out of my seven children; and all of them were good and handsome, just like him. They have all died violent deaths. When bad

luck is in a family, all one can say is, God is great, and His ways are hard to understand!"

She sat counting her stitches as she talked in a low monotonous voice, and her tears ran down her plump pale cheeks under her tortoise-shell spectacles. I could see that she had once been beautiful, and careful of her person, but without a spark of coquetry. One felt that she was a woman who had lived for those she loved, and who would love on to the end in spite of suffering.

I kissed her hand softly, and she kissed me like a mother. I tried to give her hope, but I saw that in reality she thought as I did. Her desire for her son's success in his suit was not based on any hope of her own personal happiness.

Presently Louise came in with M. Costejoux. They were both laughing. The old lady's face cleared.

"Dear aunt," said Louise, "we have been squabbling about nobility, as we always do. As usual M. Costejoux has shown more intelligence and more eloquence than I; but as usual I was in the right after all. I am practical, and he is romantic. He declares that we are entering on a new order of things. He always talks so. He thinks the Revolution has made so many changes that most of the old things will never be put back again. But I think that by and by everything will come back to what it was before the Revolution. Nobility is as indestructible as religion; and my brother is as much a Marquis now as he would have been had his father and brother died under ordinary circumstances. On my saying this, the great lawyer pleaded sentiment, duty, and all manner of things. He tells me that Nanon is rich, and an excellent match for Emilien as things go. I don't care for riches. I have only one trait in common with Emilien, — I don't

care at all for money I suppose you will answer that I do care for what money buys. I dare say that is true, and I suppose I am inconsistent; but Emilien is always consistent and logical. He has no wants, and never cares for anything. He has turned into a peasant. He will be very happy with Nanon. Yes, I am quite sure he will. Nanon is an angel of goodness and uprightness. Don't say a word, Nanette. I know you have had scruples about marrying him, though you are desperately in love with him. I know that if he thinks proper to remember that he is a Marquis, and if he hesitates about it in the least, you will give him up directly. That remains to be seen. It will be for him to decide; and if he decides in your favor, I give in. I shall accept you for my sister-in-law, and I will never remind you of your birth. I know how to behave nowadays. I do not despise you. I esteem you, — nay, I like you, and I do not forget the care you took of me; but for all that I must say what I feel."

"And what is that exactly?" I replied. "You had better say it all, having begun. You think your brother will be degraded if he forgets that he is a Marquis?"

"Not exactly *degraded*, because he will give up his rank voluntarily; but the world will not think the better of him."

"The world is full of fools!" cried M. Costejoux.

"I mean the world that I belong to," she replied.

"And which you must give up."

Thereupon he spoke to her very severely, like a father who adores his child, and yet reproves her; for she let him say harsh things, provided she recognized in them his passion. Their quarrel ended by a reconciliation, with pretty sharp stings in it, but she seemed to give in.

When he had gone she took me apart, but without any bitterness, kissed me of her *own accord*, and said,—

"Ah, Nanon, love me always, — for you will always be my Nanon, who spoiled me, and to whom I would not be ungrateful. If you marry my brother I shall blame you both, but I shall not love you the less for it. Don't let us say another word."

The next day I rose early. I dressed quietly, and went out without waking kind Madame Costejoux. I wanted to see the Park, and I met Boucherot, who showed me all over it.

Louise came out and joined me, and Boucherot having retired discreetly, she said, —

"Nanon, I have been thinking. Now that you are rich, and will grow richer (so M. Costejoux says), you ought to get him to sell you Franqueville. If you did that, you would deserve to be a *marquise*."

"Let us talk about you and not me," I said, laughing at this unexpected attempt to compromise. "Cannot Franqueville be yours if you wish for it?"

"No!" she answered quickly, "for I will never call myself Madame Costejoux. I had rather live with my brother and you, and never marry. I could turn into a peasant girl like yourself, look after your fowls, and take care of your dairy. That would not be derogatory."

"If you have quite made up your mind to refuse M. Costejoux, it would be right and honest to tell him so, my child."

"I do tell him so, every time I see him."

"No; you mistake. When you tell him so, it is in a way that leaves him hope."

"Do you think I am a flirt?"

"Certainly I do."

"Oh, Nanon, I can't help it. He does please me; and, if I must confess the truth, I do believe I love him!"

"Well, then — "

"Well, then, I will not give in to any such absurdity. How could I marry a Jacobin, — a man who would have sent my parents to the scaffold if they had fallen into his hands? He saved Emilien from death, and me from poverty; but he hated my father and my elder brother."

"No, he hated the emigration."

"And I approve of it! I have but one thing to reproach my parents with, — that they did not take me with them. They would have given me a position less brilliant, but more suitable. They might have married me in foreign parts according to my birth, instead of leaving me here to live on charity."

"Don't say that, dear Louise. It is too bad of you. You know that M. Costejoux does not exact that you should marry him."

"Well, that is just what I said. I will not marry him; and yet I have to take his gifts, or die of poverty. Marry my brother, Nanette. I see it has to be. You will give him the means of living, and I swear I will come and work for you and earn the bread you give me. I will wear wooden shoes again, and my peasant's head-dress; and I dare say it will become me very well. I will give up caring for white hands. That will be better than to sacrifice my pride of rank and my opinions."

"Whatever you please, dear Louise; you may be sure your will shall be consulted in everything if I marry your brother. And you need not work to earn your bread. If you can only put up with our peasant ways! We will try too to improve upon them, you may be sure. But you would not be happy at the Monastery."

"Yes, I should. You fancy I am proud and lazy."

"No, I don't; I only think what you have just said, —

that you love M. Costejoux, and you would be sorry to have made him and yourself both unhappy to satisfy a false pride of birth."

I stopped. I was astonished, for I had made her cry; but her emotion soon turned to anger.

"I love him in spite of myself," she said, "and we should be more unhappy married than separated. How do I know, after all, that it is love that I feel for him? Do people love at my age? I am but a child; I like to be petted and taken care of. Costejoux is a very clever man! He talks so well, he knows so much, one can learn from only listening to him, without having to study out of stupid books. He certainly has changed me very much, and sometimes it seems to me that he is right and I am wrong. And then again I don't think so; and I blush for my infatuation. I get very tired of this place. Mamma Costejoux is an excellent woman, but so meek, so monotonous, so humdrum in her domestic perfections that it exasperates me. We see nobody; circumstances forbid society, for I still have to be careful, as my presence is rather compromising. The Jacobins are not going to believe themselves put down for some time to come. In this solitude I get half crazy. I am too spoiled. Nobody would let me touch a saucepan in the kitchen, or a rake in the garden; and it is insupportable to have nothing to do. I would not say my lessons to you in the old Monastery, and my mind is empty; I live on fancies and on dreams. In short, I am tired to death; and when Costejoux comes to see us I wake up, and argue with him. I think; I feel alive again. I dare say I have mistaken all this for an attachment. Who knows but that some one else may inspire me with another attachment of the same kind?"

"If you ask my advice, dear Louise, it would be to listen

to your heart, and to sacrifice your pride. M. Costejoux deserves to be loved; he is not an ordinary man!"

"How do you know that? You know the world and men even less than I do!"

"But I guess at them better than you do. I feel that M. Costejoux has a great heart and plenty of talent. All those who speak of him say the same thing."

"He is considered a superior man, I know. If I were sure he really was — But no, that would not satisfy me. I ought not to marry an enemy of my race. Promise me to give me a home, and the day after you marry my brother I shall run away from this place and live with you."

"I cannot promise anything. If Emilien marries me he will be my master, and I shall gladly obey him. But you know he will be pleased to have you with him. So you may be quite satisfied on that point; and now, as you can feel sure that you will be free hereafter, try to make the best of the present time. See how loved you are, how indulged you are, and how happy you could be if you only would."

"Perhaps you are right," she said; "I will think over it again, Nanon. But give me your word of honor never to hint to Costejoux that I love him."

"I give it, but give it back to me; let me give him the happiness that he deserves so well, and hope will give him yet more eloquence to plead with you."

"No, no, — I won't! He presumes too much already. Tell him I left you uncertain how I felt, — for indeed it is the truth after all."

I had to be satisfied with this lame conclusion, — which was not any conclusion at all.

XXVI.

During breakfast Louise showed me more marks of affection than I had ever before received from her, and assured me several times that if I was her inferior by birth, I was greatly her superior in intelligence and education. But M. Costejoux could not get her to allow or to acknowledge that what one has gained by work and force of will is worth more than what is due to accident.

They pressed me so earnestly to stay longer that I consented to pass one other day at Franqueville. They were so kind and Louise so amiable that I had nothing but pleasure in their company; but the habit of being occupied and of busying myself with active work instead of talk made the time hang heavy on my hands, and notwithstanding the kindness of my hosts I was not sorry to get into the carriage to go back to our own home.

I said so, as we were going along, to Dumont.

"Why," he asked, "do you never say *my* home and *my* house, since you are mistress, owner, and lady of the manor?"

"No, my good friend," I answered after a moment's reflection, "I shall always be a peasant girl. I have my pride of race as well as others; it is a discovery I owe to Louise; I did not know it before. If, as she says, Emilien considers himself a Marquis, and believes me beneath him, I shall remain in his service because I love him; but I will marry no man who looks down upon me for my birth. I

am quite satisfied with my ancestry. My parents were good, honest people; my mother was full of affection and energy, — every one has told me so; my great-uncle was a saint. From father to son, from mother to daughter, we have worked with all our might, and have never wronged any man. We have nothing to blush for."

This idea remained fixed in my mind, and gave me a certain strength of purpose that I had never been conscious of before. This was what I got by my journey to Franqueville. Louise wrote to me soon after. Her handwriting was wretched, and not a word was spelled right. She told me that my visit had done her good, and that feeling herself more free by virtue of my promise, she was better satisfied with her present position and the kindness of her "amiable hosts."

The events in Paris — the *émeutes* of the 1st of April and 20th of May — did not, as usual, reach our ears till long after they had been over; it was June before we knew anything of the fierce struggle. At last however we began to understand that Jacobinism was at an end, and that the power of the mob of Paris was broken. The peasants rejoiced, and nobody in our neighborhood pitied those who were transported to Cayenne, — except me, for among them no doubt there may have been good men like M. Costejoux, who had really fancied Jacobinism the sole way of saving France, and who had sacrificed their generous instincts to what unhappily they deemed to be their duty. I was a little anxious about him for several weeks; and he even went from home for a while that he might be forgotten. This helped on his love affair; for Louise wrote me that she was very tired of being without him, that she was anxious on his account, and that she really was very much attached to him.

And indeed this was quite true. She cared for him; she took no pleasure in the vengeance produced by the reaction. To distract her in her solitude, Madame Costejoux proposed to her to pay me a visit. I urged them earnestly to come, and one bright summer day in 1795 they arrived at the Monastery.

Louise was simply dressed, and seemed to have got rid of her vain and ill-timed notions. She greatly admired the neatness, order, and comfort I had established at the Monastery, notwithstanding the hard times. My housekeeping was by no means sumptuous; but I had made the best of everything. Out of old broken furniture which I found stored away in garrets I was able by directing the village workmen, who were very handy, to get furniture,—very much out of fashion it is true, but much handsomer than modern gew-gaws. I had made out of the hall of the chapter a sort of large parlor. The sculptured stalls were scorned as too old-fashioned in the revolutionary mania; but their rare old carving, with its beautifully finished background covering a large part of the walls, was as beautiful as it was wholesome. It cost me nothing to keep it clean and bright. The black marble floor was still perfect; I had persuaded Mariotte to keep her hens and other poultry out of all the rooms on the groundfloor; for it is chiefly indifference that makes people live with animals, and I remembered that my great-uncle never suffered them in his poor cottage, in spite of which our poultry was always well cared for.

So the Monastery was all fixed and fitted up when Louise arrived; she was very much surprised to find it so much nicer and more imposing than she remembered it.

I had fitted up Emilien's room for her, and had made it very pretty. I had also carefully prepared mine for Ma-

dame Costejoux, who found it very comfortable. Though my ordinary fare with Dumont and Mariotte was very plain, I had taken care enough of the Prior, who loved good eating, to know how to order and even to cook a good dinner. I was much beloved in the neighborhood, and I had only to speak, to have gunners and fishermen ready to bring me their best; and as I did not often make demands upon their kindness, my rare days of luxury cost me only "thank you." They even insisted that I was obliging them.

Louise pondered upon what she saw. Her good sense seemed aroused, and she wanted to help me about the house that I might see, as she said, that it was a pity they had treated her like a doll at Franqueville. But I could see that she was not born to wait upon herself. She was awkward, thoughtless, and very soon tired. She could not understand how I found time to do so many things, and yet to read, and so know more each day than I had done the day before.

"You are a very superior person," she said. "I have found out that I did not understand you, and that M. Costejoux was right about you. I wish I had your recipe for finding the days too short. I cannot find enough to do in them. I am as clever I think as others when I converse, but I cannot learn things by myself; and ideas have to come to me through words that I can hear and can reply to."

"A good reason," I replied, "for having a lawyer for a husband. You will never do better."

She was charming to Dumont, with whom she dined without objection, and to Mariotte, whose pardon she asked for having so often worried her. She was so sweet when she pleased that everybody's impulse was to love her,

without asking if she could pay back the affection given her. She was one of those persons who think they can repay devotion with pretty words and charming smiles. She went about the village and delighted those whom she had formerly provoked by her behavior. I, like everybody else, gave her my heart without asking much return from her. I was satisfied with the sweet change in her temper and her manners. When a person has not a great power of loving, it is a happy gift to be very charming.

The war with Holland was over; peace was made. I had hoped to see Emilien back at once, but he did not come as he had led me to expect he would. Dumont told me he could not; that the Army of the Sambre-et-Meuse might be employed elsewhere, and that he might be already on the march for some new campaign. Notwithstanding the delays and accidents of the post, which was out of order like everything else, we had always been so fortunate as to receive all Emilien's letters, and I refused to believe that they could possibly have gone astray. Therefore my anxiety became almost unbearable when I got no letter for three mortal months. Dumont said everything he could to reassure me, but I could see that he was anxious too. If we had known where Emilien's regiment was we should have set out for it, were our only reward to have been one embrace under fire.

The days that followed this silence were terrible. When one awakens every morning with the feeling that all hope is gone, every day makes one more impatient. In vain I tried to distract my thoughts by work. I felt that should I lose the object of my life, I should care neither for life nor labor. I used to go and meditate on the tomb that I had had made for the dear Prior. I used to talk to the

kind soul who had hoped to make us happy. I used to whisper to him, "Dear, good Prior, if Emilien is dead, I shall soon come and join you."

One evening when I was sitting on this grave with my head leaning against the stone cross which had been substituted for the wooden one that I had first seen there, I felt weaker and more depressed than usual. Up to that time I had sustained myself by thinking that if Emilien were dead I should soon die too. I had felt sure of it; but now I began to cry bitterly, thinking of all that I had made ready to give him; and as real things mingled with my grief, I saw all the struggles of my past and my dreams for the future pass before me. So much care, so many plans, so much labor, so much patience, so much calculation, — and all to come to nothing! What had been the use of it? Why should I have labored and striven, what was the good of having loved, while a stray ball might have destroyed everything in less time than it took me to realize my sorrow?

I tried to comfort myself by thinking of my reunion with him I loved in another and a better world, where all things would be sweet and certain. But I had no time for mysticism. I could submit myself to God, and was as religious as my education in those times would permit me to be; but I had no great enthusiasm for the unknown. I could not imagine myself happy in such a future world as had been described to me. I felt a little afraid of it indeed, for I could not understand an existence with nothing to do. In my sorrow I perceived that I loved life and the things of this world, not indeed for myself alone, but for him who had been the object of my love, and I perceived that I could not be satisfied with the mere hope of heaven after I had finished my work on earth.

I thought over all the pleasant sufferings and hardships of my sacred task.

"What a pity," I cried, "to give up all before it has ever been begun! To fail when all was hope and promise! How pleased he would have been to see his garden so improved, his little room refurnished, his old Dumont still in good health and cured of his one failing, his poor Mariotte still gay, his creatures in good condition, his dog well cared for, and his books in order!"

And in my mood of despondency I saw all falling into neglect and decay if he should never return. I thought of all that would die too if we both died. I thought even of my hens, and of the poor garden butterflies, which would soon find no more flowers, and I wept for those dumb things as if they had been part of myself.

And yet my ear was always on the alert for strange noises, — like that of one who is expecting news of life or death. As I wept, I seemed to hear an unaccustomed sound in the courtyard. I sprang to my feet. I reached the courtyard trembling, ready to fall dead if it were bad news of him. All of a sudden I heard Emilien's voice, — but weak and low, as if he were speaking in a whisper, — in the chapter parlor.

It was his voice! I could not be mistaken. He was there; but he had not come in search of me! He was speaking to Dumont; he was telling him something that I could not hear. I only caught the words, "Go and bring her; but don't tell her yet. I dread the meeting."

Why dread the meeting? What dreadful thing must be concealed from me? My limbs refused to take me over the threshold. I staggered, and leaned against the arch of the doorway. I saw him, — it was he. He was standing up, and Dumont was throwing a cloak over his shoul-

ders. Why a cloak in summer-time? Why this care of fixing himself instead of hastening to find me? Was it to hide that his officer's uniform was in tatters? What was Dumont whispering to him now? I tried to say, "Emilien!" but his name turned, as I said it, to a strangling sob. He replied by rushing toward me with open arms. Arms? No! *Only one arm.* He pressed me to his heart with one arm! The other — the right arm — had been amputated at the elbow; and that was what he wished to hide from me at the first moment.

At the thought of what he must have suffered, of what perhaps he suffered still, I was terribly agitated. It seemed to half kill me. I had no feeling of self-restraint. I covered him with tears and kisses. I cried out, beside myself, —

"No more war! No more sorrows! You shall never, never go away from me!"

"Ah, you see, Nanon, I am no longer fit for war," he said. "If I am still good enough to be your lover, I have come back never to leave you again."

When we could calm ourselves enough to understand anything, he said, —

"Tell me, dear Nanette, do you feel no repulsion, no contempt for a poor mutilated soldier? I am cured. I would not come back till I was well. For three months — ever since the peace — I have been under treatment for a wound received in our first battle, which I neglected at the time, and which was aggravated by the frost during the Dutch campaign, — which I persisted in making with my arm in a sling. I did suffer horribly, if I must tell the truth. I hoped to keep my arm to work with for you; but it was impossible. At last I consented to let them cut it off; and when the operation was over I wrote with my

left hand to Dumont, that he might tell you gently of my recovery and my near return. It seems you did not get my letter, and that I have caused you a terrible shock: that is the greatest grief that I have suffered for my country, — for the loss of my arm has pained me less than the sight of your sorrow."

"It is all over now," I said. "Forgive me for having marred, by my weakness, the moment that should have been the proudest of your life. As soon as you cease to suffer I shall be happy; and if you could have lost your arm without pain, I would have been only glad to have to wait on you a little more than ever."

"I was sure of it, Nanon! I told myself so during the operation. I said: 'She will be glad to wait on me.' But don't expect I shall let you work for both of us. I will find some sedentary occupation. I will write; I will become skilful in the use of my left hand; perhaps I may even get a little pension, — later, when they can think of such things."

"You will not want it," exclaimed Dumont, with a look aside at me. "You can keep the accounts of your farm; you can superintend your laborers; you can count your sheaves and your receipts."

"And if I cannot use a fork or spade, you will help me to put sacks and other burdens on my back; for I am well accustomed to fatigue, and ten times as strong as when I went away. Ha! ha! so your affairs are prospering? The Monastery is a pleasure to look at. M. Costejoux must have laid out a good bit of money on it. Does he expect to live here?"

"No," I said; "for you I have taken care of this property and its buildings, — for buildings and property are all yours."

"Mine?" he said, laughing. "How can that be?"

Dumont told him; but except that he was much touched by the generosity of the old Prior, he did not seem so struck by it all as Dumont hoped and expected,— and Dumont appeared more pleased to tell him of our wealth than he to hear about it. I was not at all surprised. I knew his indifference to money was almost a defect; but I loved him for it, and I knew that by degrees he would appreciate the comfort of having his livelihood assured to him.

At first he was all astonishment; especially when he heard how I had bought the Monastery even before I knew for certain if I ever should be able to pay for it; and how, when I had the means of paying for it, I had begun at once to spend my money in buying something else. But as he had quick intelligence, he soon understood my plans, and felt confidence in them.

"You like to buy and to sell," he said; "my disposition is to think less of the material. But I know you can do marvels for the future, and yet never let the present suffer; and I know, too, that I shall always find that what you aim at is what I ought to wish for. Take me for your manager, — give me my orders; my happiness will be to obey you."

After having spoken to him at some length about his sister, we put off the news of his brother's death till the next day; for we saw that he had not heard of it. All my fear of finding him metamorphosed by his eldership and his title had disappeared; but I did not wish to mar our joy by tears, — and though he had hardly known his brother, we would not sadden further this first day of happiness.

How I looked at him in the candle-light, when I found

myself sitting opposite to him at supper! He had grown; his face was longer, his eyes more hollow. He had nothing now left of youth about him except his lovely smile, which always made his mouth handsome, and that calm look of trust and confidence which made him good-looking, in spite of the irregularity of his features.

I was sorry to see him so pale and so thin; it seemed to me he did not eat at supper, and I would not believe that it was only because emotion choked him.

"If you worry about me so much you will grieve me, Nanon," he said. "Remember that an arm left on the field of honor is matter of pride to a soldier, and that some of my comrades were jealous of me. Others who fought as well as I, fancied I had had more than my share of luck; and I have had to earn their pardon for my promotion and my wound. I might have risen rapidly had I been at all ambitious; but I am not, as you know. I only wanted to do my duty, and to get my baptism of fire as a man and a patriot. I know not what the future has in store for France. I am leaving an army passionately republican, and I have crossed half France to get here, and have found it disgusted with the republic. Whatever takes place, I shall keep my political creed; but I will not hate my countrymen. My conscience is satisfied. I have given one arm to my country and to the cause of liberty throughout the world; but that is all. I have bought the right to be henceforth a citizen, a laborer, the head of a family; I have expiated my birth, I have conquered my place in the line of civic equality, and if France gives up that right, I shall fall back on my moral equality. And now, Nanette," he said, rising and folding his napkin skilfully with his left hand, "take me to the Prior's grave; I would like to kiss the soil that covers him."

XXVII.

When we left the Monastery he asked me to walk down with him to the river, assuring me he was not tired. He wanted to revisit the old willow; such a walk had been his prevailing idea, he said, through all his sufferings. It had been mine too, but I begged him to wait a moment. I ran to my room and got the dried willow-leaves that I had always kept by me, and I put them into his hand when we stood under the tree. The air was soft; the sky was dotted with stars; and the river, which was low, rippled so softly that we hardly heard it at our feet. He drew my hands toward him and placed them on his heart, saying, —

"You see, Nanon, Nature is like what she was that day. What I once promised you here I promise you now. I never will make you unhappy for a moment; no one shall ever take your place in my heart."

I told him that I had often thought of that first promise, — that promise that I could not understand at the time; and that by degrees the promise under that willow-tree had so entered into my dreams that during my illness I had fancied myself going to be married with a bridal crown of its white catkins, and then that I was dead and buried wearing the same virgin crown.

He did not know that I had been ill, and that I had been near dying. I had not told him that; and I made him cry by the account of how I had found out the death

of the Prior. Then we began talking of Louise, and as he was curious to know how she felt about me, I thought I had better no longer conceal from him that he was a Marquis, and that Louise hoped he would not disregard his position. He was so true, so just, that he did not feel it his duty to show false regret for a brother who had never shown him anything but contempt and indifference; and as to his marquisship, he shrugged his shoulders.

"My love," he said, "I do not know what people nowadays think in France of those old titles. I come from a sphere where their value is at so low an ebb that if any one had called me 'marquis' in the regiment I should have had to fight him to prevent ridicule from attaching itself to my name."

"Your sister thinks," I said, "that these titles are still as good as ever, and that the day will come — before long maybe — when those who can will resume them eagerly; she even thinks that those who are now republicans and proud of their position in the middle classes, like M. Costejoux, will be anxious to take the names and titles of these nobles whose estates they have acquired."

"Anything is possible," said Emilien. "The French have plenty of vanity, and the gravest of us have some touch of childish folly. Some day maybe people will forget the blood that we have shed to drive back those invaders who wanted to restore such relics of old times, and give us back monarchy and nobility, with their privileges, their convents, and their victims. But, Nanette, fix the time of our marriage. You see I have no scruples in offering myself to thee, with no money and with only one arm. I know that you country people have a great dread of mutilation. If it is an honor in the army, it is quite the reverse among laborers: a one-armed man may be pitied, —

nothing more. Will you be satisfied to know that no woman will be jealous of you for my sake; that every one will say that you have taken a great charge upon your shoulders, instead of having married some stout fellow who would have brought you help and honor?"

"People hereabout know better than that," I said; "they will not say such things. They love you and respect you, — for they know you. They feel that your head is worth a hundred arms; and if a woman has to make other girls jealous in order to be happy, I have no doubt that there are plenty who will envy me my bridegroom. Ah! once I hesitated to marry you, I confess; but it was when you had both your arms! I still had peasant notions: I feared that you would lose caste by our marriage, and perhaps that you might some day suffer even in your own eyes. I was terribly miserable; for some months I felt convinced that I must give you up — "

"You wished to make me wretched!"

"Ah, hush! I did not mean to leave you. But let me tell you how I triumphed over that great sorrow. After I began to get rich; after M. Costejoux showed me how I could accomplish it, and had made the first steps easy to me; after the generosity of the Prior gave me the chance to try my strength and to prove that I could be of use to you, and not a burden; when I felt the absurdity of Louise's notions, and when I saw how excellent were the arguments by which M. Costejoux opposed them, — I took heart; I began to feel a new pride awakening in me; and now I do not think I can ever again feel ashamed of being what I am."

"Right! as you always are," he cried, almost kneeling at my feet. "I acknowledge upon my part that sobriety, hard labor, and honesty will not suffice to purchase inde-

pendence, without pains, care, energy, economy, and intelligence. You see, Nanon, you are my benefactress. I acknowledge that if material prosperity is not absolutely necessary to happiness, it is very desirable, and makes all things easier. I shall have it, thanks to you, and never fear that I can forget all I owe you."

By this time we had reached the bars of the pasture.

"Do you recollect," he said, "that here we met for the first time seven years ago? You had one sheep, which was to be the beginning of your fortune; I had nothing, and never was intended to have anything. But for you I might have been an idiot and a vagabond, in the midst of this Revolution, which would have thrown me on the world, with no notions of life or of society; or, if I had any, they would have been wild, desperate, and foolish ones. You saved me from degradation then, and later from the scaffold and proscription. I am yours. I have but one merit: I know what I owe to thee, and to thy love!"

We were near the burying-ground, and before going in he wished to touch the poor Prior's grave in the darkness.

"Dear friend," he said, "can you hear me? If you can, hear me say that I love you still, and thank you for having blessed and benefited your two children. Hear me promise to make happy her whom you give me for my wife."

Again he asked me to fix our marriage day. I told him that we had better go and ask M. Costejoux, who I knew had got back to Franqueville, to choose the earliest time. Emilien saw with me that we owed some act of deference to so kind a friend. Besides, he wished ardently to have him for his brother-in-law, and he thought he might put an end to the indecisions of Louise. We went accordingly to Franqueville the next morning.

As we entered the Park we saw M. Costejoux coming towards us with open arms, and an apparent smile of satisfaction. But soon we found that he was making a great effort. He grew pale, and there were burning tears in his eyes.

"My friend, my dear friend," cried Emilien, who attributed his emotion, as I did, to the sight of his own poor mutilated arm, "do not pity me. She loves me; she accepts me; and we have come to ask your fraternal benediction."

Costejoux grew paler than before.

"Yes, yes," he answered, — "yes, that's what it was; the sight of such a terrible consequence of war. I knew it. Dumont told me; and yet to have you come back thus — But let us speak of your coming happiness. When are you to be married?"

"You shall decide," I said. "If you would like us to wait in order to unite our happiness with yours —"

He shook his head and stopped me.

"I had certain plans once," he said; "I have given them up now. I do it not unwilling. Let us sit down on this bench. I am very tired; I have been hard at work all night; I have been walking all the morning —"

"You are sick, or you have some great trouble," said Emilien, seizing hold of his hands. "Your mother —"

"Is well, very well. You shall see her in a moment. My good mother!"

"And Louise?"

"Your sister, — she is quite well too. But you will not find *her* here. She is — gone."

"Gone! How; where?"

"With her old relative, Madame de Montifault, — the Vendénne, the irreconcilable *chouanne*, charged by your

parents to take care of Louise, but hitherto hindered by the high duty of fomenting and keeping alive the civil war. At last she has come out of her den. She arrived here last evening, to claim Louise, — and Louise went with her."

"She made no resistance?"

"None; and she showed no regret at leaving us. *You* will be sorry not to embrace her to-day, and perhaps not for a long while —"

"I shall go after her. Wherever she may be I shall find her. I shall bring her back. I am of age. She is under my guardianship; she is under my care. My sister shall not go and live among those rebels."

"Peace is made, my friend; hatreds should cease. I am weary of them. I beg you to let your sister follow the bent of her own wishes. She will be twenty in a few months; a year more, and she will have the legal right to live where she chooses, even as she now has the moral right to think as she likes, to hate and to repulse whomsoever she will. We have suffered and fought for liberty as best we could. Let us respect the liberty of conscience, and understand that all that pertains to old beliefs is passing away."

"You are right," said Emilien; "and if my sister is really in earnest in thus quitting your house, I will let her follow her prejudices. But perhaps they are not so deeply seated as you think. Perhaps she fancied she was submitting to the last wishes of her parents. Perhaps in her heart she is not ungrateful; and since she is nearly of an age to be her own mistress, perhaps she is only waiting my sanction to —"

"No, never!" exclaimed Costejoux, rising. "She does not love me; and I love her no longer! Her obstinacy has worn out my patience; her coldness has frozen my soul. I have suffered, — I acknowledge it. I have passed a dreadful

night; but I have reasoned with myself, compared things, recovered myself. I am a man; I was wrong to expect anything from a woman. Forgive me, Nanette, — you are an exception. I may say before you what I think of other women."

"And your mother?" I cried.

"My mother! She is another exception. There are two of you, and I know of no others. But let us go and find that dear mother. She is grieving for Louise! She is crying; her tears comfort her. Help me to change her thoughts, to set her mind at rest, for she is very anxious about me. And one thing comforts me, — it is that Louise never would have made my mother happy; she did not love her, — she never has loved, never can love, anybody."

"Allow me to think my sister not so bad as that," replied Emilien, warmly. "I am going after her; I shall set off this moment. I trust Nanette to you. I shall be back to-morrow. My sister cannot have gone far, since they left only last evening. Tell me what road they took."

"It is of no use! since the sacrifice is made —"

"No, it is *not* made!"

"Emilien, let me cure myself! I would rather never see her again."

"You *will* be cured if she proves really ungrateful, for to you as to me, and to all those capable of self-sacrifice, ingratitude is odious. You are a man, as you say. Be a true man, not a weak one. Be generous to the last. If she comes back repentant, and if you cannot love her after all this, forgive her with the dignity and kindness that become you. But that she should ask your pardon is a question of honor. Adieu. Give me directions how to overtake her. I require it from you."

Emilien, gentle as he was, was so firm sometimes when

duty called him that M. Costejoux had to give in, and to tell him the road that Louise and Madame Montifault had taken to reach La Vendée. He kissed me, sprang into the carriage that had brought us, and was off without entering the halls of his fathers, or even looking up at them.

I succeeded in comforting Madame Costejoux about her son's state of mind. During supper he gave her to understand that he was tired and worn out, but resigned to his disappointment, and that even were Louise to come back he should see her with perfect tranquillity.

He made such an effort that he deceived even me. He left us early in the evening, saying that he was overcome with sleep, and that when he had slept off his anger and disappointment he should be himself again.

Madame Costejoux begged me to pass the night in her room. She wanted, she said, to talk to me about Louise, and to tell me about the unexampled harshness of the old Vendean lady, her tone of arrogance, her insulting ways, and her impertinence, against which Louise — apparently confused and powerless — had not had spirit and courage enough to make head.

"And yet," I said, "Louise loves your son; she told me so in confidence, — a confidence I now betray for her justification."

"Did she love him?" she said. "I have often thought so. But now she is ashamed of it; and very soon in that land of priests to which she is being transported she will confess it as a sin; she will do penance to get rid of the disgrace. This is her return for all our benefits, our tenderness, our care, and our devotion. Ah, my poor son! would that her contempt might be his cure."

She sighed herself to sleep. I could not close my eyes.

ıestioned with myself whether contempt could extin-
h passion. I did not know. I had had no experience.
d never been under the dreadful necessity of despis-
any one I loved. The soul of a man agitated like that
M. Costejoux was to me a mystery. I saw in him such
erful inconsistencies. I remembered his severities, —
, almost the cruelties of his political career, yet at
ıame time his generous pity for his victims, his hatred
the nobles, and his love for Louise. These things
ɜ to me incomprehensible inconsistencies.

XXVIII.

I WAS in a light sleep about two hours after midnight when Madame Costejoux, starting up, called out in a loud voice and in an accent of distress the name of her son. I tried to rouse her from her dream.

"Yes, yes!" she said, half waking, "it *is* a nightmare. I dreamed that he was falling off a cliff into the sea. I am sorry I went to sleep at all."

But as she had sat up all the previous night talking with him on the one subject, she fell back upon her pillow, and sleep conquered her again. Presently she spoke once more, and I caught among confused words this earnest entreaty: —

"Help him! don't leave him!"

A superstitious fear took possession of me.

"Who knows," I thought, "if this poor mother may not have been granted a presentiment of some great peril threatening her son? Suppose he were now at some crisis in his fate? Suppose that at this very moment he were tempted to commit suicide?"

A window at this moment was opened below. I looked at Madame Costejoux. She stirred in her sleep, but did not awaken. I held my breath and listened. Somebody was walking about in M. Costejoux's chamber; he was therefore not asleep. Was it his custom to get up so early? Stimulated by anxiety, but without any definite intention, I dressed myself in haste, and went downstairs noiselessly.

I listened at his door. All was silent. I was going back to my own room when I heard steps on the ground-floor. I went down to the door that led into the garden; it had just been opened. I looked toward the Park, and there I saw M. Costejoux walking rapidly. I followed him, determined to keep him in sight.

He went on with quick steps, gesticulating as if making a speech; but I heard no words. I drew nearer. He did not notice me. His wild looks frightened me. His eyes were hollow and unnaturally bright; he seemed to see things and people that I did not see. Was it his habit to study his speeches in this manner, or was he out of his mind? He went towards the end of the Park, which terminated in a terrace on the top of a steep cliff, beneath which flowed a small river; and he went on gesticulating close to the verge of this dangerous place, as if he did not know what he was doing. At the risk of interrupting him if he were engaged in some important law-case, I went to him suddenly, seized his arm, and made him turn round.

"What's the matter?" he cried, as if much startled. "Who are you? What do you want?"

"Were you walking in your sleep?" I said. "You did not seem to know where you were going."

"True," he replied; "I do walk in my sleep sometimes. It is not exactly somnambulism, but something like it. It is in the family; my father was liable to it when he was engaged in a difficult case."

"And the case you are now engaged in —"

"It is lost. I fancied myself addressing a mob of *chouans*.[1] I was pleading with them to restore Louise.

[1] Literally, night-owls. A name given to the royalists in La Vendée. — TRANS.

They wanted to put me to death. Nanon, you have saved my life, for you have awakened me on the very edge of this precipice. But the *chouans* will not give me back Louise. I might as well have pleaded to the stones!"

"So you were dreaming? *Really?* Had you no bad intentions?"

"What do you mean?"

And as I dared not put my fears into words, he made an effort to collect himself, and guessed my meaning. He had by this time entirely recovered his self-possession, and seizing my hand, he cried, —

"My good Nanon, did you take me for a coward or a madman? What brings you here? Our farm laborers are not yet abroad, — it is barely daylight."

"That was why I felt anxious at your going out so early."

"Were you awake? Is my mother anxious, too?"

"No; she is asleep."

"Poor mother! Sleep is one of the compensations of old age. She will not have the physical strength to worry herself greatly."

"Do not believe it; she sleeps very badly. She was dreaming just now, and saw you falling from a cliff into the sea. That was why I got frightened, and most fortunately. You might have killed yourself!"

"Better for me!"

"And how about her? Is dying of grief so pleasant a thing?"

"Nanon, I do not mean to kill myself. No! For my mother's sake I will bear the burden of my life. Poor, dear mother! I know I should kill her, too. You can see what a close connection there must be between us,

since the agitation in my soul affected her in her dreams. Ah, I should be a wretch if I did not struggle against any temptation to suicide. And yet it fascinates me; it attracts me against my will. A dream led me to the verge of this cliff. Let us leave the cursed spot. I came to it yesterday morning; I was not asleep then. I looked down into the pale-green water at my feet. I said to myself that there I could find the end of all my troubles. But I hastened away, terrified at myself, and thinking of my mother. I never again will come to this place, Nanon, I promise you. I will live on and suffer."

I led him back to that part of the garden where his mother would be sure to see him if she looked out of her window when she awoke; and sitting down upon a bench, I led him to talk freely.

"Is it possible," I said, "that you have let this violent passion take possession of such a mind as yours, and have allowed it thus to master you?"

"It is not that disappointment alone," he said; "it is everything. The Republic is dying, both around me and within me. Yes, I feel it dying; my heart is growing cold toward the Republic, — my faith has left me."

"But why?" I said. "We are still a republican people; and the era of peace and tolerance that you once dreamed of has arrived. Our arms are everywhere successful; those without have sued for peace, and those within have submitted to the Government. Prosperity will return with liberty."

"Yes; but Europe will not accept our independence. Things will go back to what they were before; the revolutionary impulse has died out. I loved the Revolution as men love their mistresses; and now even my enthusiasm is past, and disgust has taken possession of me. Instead of

accomplishing our mission, all has failed, — because of men's unworthiness and faint-heartedness. Posterity will misjudge us some day."

These words showed me the depression and the bitterness the fall of the Jacobins had left in this man's ardent soul. Being a man of action by nature, he could not wait the slow realization of his ideal; and I — an ignorant young girl — had to point out to him that all that had been done by himself and by his party was not labor in vain, and that the day would come when posterity would praise as well as blame them. I reminded him how great had been the suffering of the lower classes before the Revolution, — how much progress they had made and were still making. I said nothing about the horrors of the Reign of Terror; he felt them even more keenly than I. I put into what I said some of the ardor and conviction of Emilien; for the deep devotion of my *fiancé* to his country had made me no longer a mere peasant, but a true Frenchwoman.

M. Costejoux listened to me very seriously; and when he felt that in my soul I really believed every word I spoke, he seemed moved by my reasoning. After this he resumed the subject of Louise; and having relieved his feelings, he yielded to my entreaties. I almost went down upon my knees to get him to promise me to try and cure himself, morally and physically, — for I could see that he was really ill. The strange condition in which I had surprised him was not natural, — was not that of a healthy mind. I got him to promise that he would sleep and eat with all the regularity possible for a man in his profession; and finally he put his hands in mine, and swore to me that he would struggle against all temptations to suicide, as unworthy of a good son

and a true man. After this we went back to his mother. He was much moved, and more than half submissive to his fate.

Poor Costejoux! It was not altogether a happy one. Louise wept bitterly when Emilien reproached her. She wanted to write to M. and Madame Costejoux, to tell them of the struggle in her heart, — of her regret, and of her gratitude; yet she hardly knew how to write, and would have preferred to speak to them. But she dared not come back, — she could not conquer her old ideas. She begged her brother to repeat exactly what she said to M. Costejoux. He had not expected her back again. He got over his grief, said no more of his wrongs, and showed, at the *fête champêtre* given at the Monastery when we were married, a gayety and kindliness which made everybody charmed with him.

He was either cured, or seemed to be so. But Louise grew weary of the poverty of her Vendean relatives, and perhaps also of their violence and narrow-mindedness.

One fine day she came back, and, as it were, flung herself at the feet of Madame Costejoux. A few weeks later she had married our friend.

They lived on good terms apparently, and neither had any real reason to reproach the other. But their hearts were never thoroughly united. Each had an enthusiasm which amounted to religion, — she for priests and kings; he for the Republic and Jean Jacques Rousseau. He always was in love with her; she was so pretty, with her kitten-like ways. But he could never feel with her in serious things; and sometimes he was sharp and bitter of speech, which showed the aching void in his kind heart, where real happiness and tenderness should have been. The death of his mother added to his moral discomfort.

After that he bent all his energies to make a fortune, in order to satisfy the frivolous tastes of his wife; and he became one of the richest men in our part of the country. But Louise died young, leaving him two charming daughters, one of whom has married her cousin, — Pierre de Franqueville, my eldest son.

As for us, we have become rich too, and have been able to bring up our five children entirely to our satisfaction. They are all married; and when we have the happiness to gather them around us with their wives and children, we have to set twenty-five places for the whole family. Costejoux mourned sincerely for his poor Louise; but he lived for his daughters' sake, whom he adored, and the end of his life was happiness and peace. But he never changed his political creed. In that respect he and my husband always remained young. They were not deceived by the Revolution of July (1830). They were not satisfied with that of February (1848). I have long ceased to occupy myself with politics, — I have had no time to spare. I never contradicted my husband and M. Costejoux; and even if I were quite sure that I was right and they were wrong, I think I should hardly have the heart to argue with them, so greatly do I admire the earnestness of those men of the past, — the one impetuous and enthusiastic, the other calm, unchangeable, just, and good. In heart neither of the two grew old, and they have always seemed to me richer in love and fresher in imagination than the men of to-day.

Last year I lost the lover of my youth, the companion of my life, the purest and the justest human being that I ever knew. I have always prayed Heaven that I might not long survive him; and yet I am still living, for I am useful to the dear children and grandchildren who sur-

round me. I am seventy-five now, and it cannot be long before I go to join my best-beloved.

"Do not grieve, Nanon," he said to me as he was dying. "We cannot be long parted; we have loved each other too fondly in this life to be able to go on long in a new world without each other."

Madame la Marquise de Franqueville died in 1864, worn out with the fatigue of nursing the sick through an epidemic that broke out in her village. She had never felt any of the infirmities of age; she was always kindly active and beneficent, adored by her family, and by those of her *parish* (for the French peasants of the central provinces keep up the old names). By her intelligent management and that of her husband and sons, she had amassed a handsome fortune, and she and they always put their wealth to noble uses. She liked to say that it all sprung from one sheep.

I have also heard that by her worth and kindliness she conquered the repugnance felt toward her peasant birth by her husband's relatives. She helped those who were in poverty or trouble, and was so careful not to offend the convictions of the rest that all held her in high esteem, and some in great respect and affection. Madame de Montifault would never see her, but she was heard to say one day, —

"They will have it that this Nanon is a person as distinguished and as well bred as anybody else. She certainly shows delicacy in doing kindnesses. Maybe she has extended her cares even to me without my knowing it, for I have received various benefits which I could never trace to any other source. However, I prefer not to know about them. When the Bourbons come back

and I can repay my obligations, I will trace them out. I would rather not have to thank Nanon, or her Jacobin of a husband."

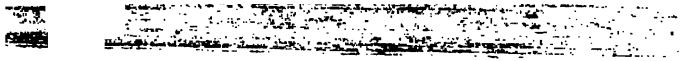
All the persecuted nobles of that day had not been so implacable; and if when the Bourbons were restored many were vindictive, others were more sensible, and showed their gratitude.

The great parlor of the Monastery would be full on great occasions of visitors and friends of all ranks, from the noble relatives of M. Costejoux's daughters (who were de Franquevilles through their mother) to the great-grandchildren of Jean Lepic, Nanon's great-uncle. I have made inquiries about Jacques and Pierre, the two cousins of the Marquise, who were the companions of her childhood. The elder, whom she had taught to read, became an officer; but when he came back on furlough from the war she had to drop her intimacy with him. It was about the time of her marriage. He had taken a notion to supplant Emilien in her affections, seeing, as he said, that he was of the same rank as his rival, and had one arm more than he. He was consoled at last, and married elsewhere. As for her younger cousin Pierre, he remained the friend of the family; and one of his sons, a man of good education, but a son of the soil, married one of the demoiselles de Franqueville.

I once saw the Marquise de Franqueville at Bourges, where she had come on business. She made a great impression on me by her grand air, and by her peasant's high cap, called a *cornette,*— such a head-dress as adorned royal heads in the Middle Ages, whence it has come down to our own peasant women. There too I saw the Marquis, with his gray hair, and his empty sleeve fastened across his breast to his vest button. He too wore the costume of

village. The simplicity of his manners, his pure and lest speech, and the extraordinary beauty of his eyes e me the idea of a man of great worth, who had pre- ed happiness to splendor, and had chosen love in ference to ambition.

THE END.



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